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TOWARDS STRUGGLE

SELECTED MANIFESTOES, SPEECHES & WRITINGS

BY

JAYA PRAKASH NARAYAN

EDITED BY

YUSUF MEHERALLY



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FOREWORD

JAYAPRAKASH is not only one of the most popular but also one of the most important and significant personalities in India today. It is therefore natural that the desire to understand his ideas and programme of work should be both general and widespread in this country. The present volume was planned in order to meet this pressing demand.

For the first time a representative selection from his manifestoes, speeches and other writings is brought together here. When the work was taken in hand Jayaprakash was still in detention, though he is happily with us now. Needless to say, that the responsibility for the selection and arrangement of material are mine and not Jayaprakash's. His character-sketch published in the book is taken from the first volume of the *Leaders of India*.

The book is being published on the 9th of August—on the fourth anniversary of the fateful day on which the Quit India Rebellion started in 1942. Jayaprakash was in prison at the time. His sensational and daring escape from the Hazaribagh Central Prison shortly after and the heroic part he played in organising and inspiring the forces of resistance now belong to history. It is to be hoped that the present volume will help to fill up an important gap in our political literature.

Bombay,
1st August, 1946.

YUSUF MEHERALLY

JAYA PRAKASH

By YUSUF MEHERALLY

ON a certain day in 1933 the gates of the Nasik Central Prison opened to discharge a tall and distinguished looking youth, on completion of his sentence of imprisonment. There is little doubt that when the historian of the future comments on our times, he will mark out that event as one of the significant happenings of the year 1933. For, with his release, a new force had emerged in Indian politics. Jayaprakash Narayan came out of prison with an idea, a purpose and a vision. And out of that was born the Congress Socialist Party.

He is today one of the most popular and respected names in Indian public life. But few know what a magnificent personality it is that passes under the name of Jayaprakash. Fewer still suspect the widely varied experience and adventures that have gone to the making of so fascinating a man.

He has known life at first hand. Perhaps that is the reason why his thinking is so clear. When he reached America to continue his studies, he began his career not in the class-room but on a farm. He arrived in California in October 1922, to find that there were still three months for the University term to begin and he was not rich enough to keep up on his own resources. So he went out to work on a fruit farm. Large numbers of Indians live in California, among whom are a great many Sikhs and Pathans. Jayaprakash joined a Pathan gang whose head Sher Khan, was a picturesque figure, physically about twice the size of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. The Non-Co-operation Movement had deeply stirred Indians all over the world and any new arrival from India was an interesting figure. When it became known that Jayaprakash had left his college to join the Non-Co-operation Movement and had given up his university scholarship as a consequence, there was really no difficulty for him in finding a job.

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The fruit season was then ending and Jayaprakash worked hard from morning till night amidst grapes, peaches, apricots, almonds. After they were plucked and sorted out they were treated with lime and then with sulphur. Then they were dried and sent to the factory for cleaning. Jayaprakash's work was to walk from basket to basket, throwing out bad fruit. Perhaps that is what he is doing even now—plucking out the rotten fruits from the Congress basket.

So he worked for ten hours a day and seven days a week with no Sundays and no holidays. But the wages were attractive, forty cents an hour, which worked out at four dollars a day, and at the rate of exchange prevailing then, fourteen rupees daily. To young Jayaprakash this appeared a fabulous amount and in a month he was able to save eighty dollars. Armed with this fortune he went back to Berkeley, the fruit season having ended, to await the opening of the University. He took a room there and did his own cooking.

One term at California and Jayaprakash was again bankrupt! So he went up to Iowa University where tuition fees were one-fourth of those at California. Even to pay for these he worked on a peach farm.

From Iowa he next got to Wisconsin University. Here, a new element entered into his life, an element that was to give a completely different direction to his life.

It was here that Jayaprakash's restless mind found the illumination he was groping for. He had been perplexed at the prevalence of great wealth and grinding poverty, side by side, even in America—the land of opportunity. What was the solution of this riddle? Why was it that a few had all the good things, while the vast majority were condemned to a life of squalor, poverty and ceaseless toil? A teacher of the University had declared that there was no solution to the problem of poverty, in the framework of the capitalist system, and he was known to be an ardent socialist. Jayaprakash eagerly turned to him and a great

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attachment grew up between the two. He started devouring the classics of Marxism and before long, but not without a powerful mental struggle, he became a confirmed socialist. His life now took on a new meaning. He gave up science and turned to a study of economics. His thesis for the M.A. degree was highly praised and he was considered one of the most brilliant students at his University. He went from here to New York where he was taken seriously ill and was in a hospital for several months.

He stayed in America for nearly eight years and studied at five different Universities. He started as a student of Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry and then devoted years to the study of Biology, Psychology, Economics and Sociology. He had several times interrupted his studies in order to earn enough to carry on at his University for a term or two. He had worked as a farm labourer for ten hours a day, as a packer in a jam factory, as a mechanic in an iron concern, as a waiter in a restaurant. He had tried his hand as a salesman. When, therefore, he returned to India in 1929, it was not as a raw student looking forward to a comfortable life, but as one who had seen life at close quarters and was fully determined to devote himself to public life.

Jawaharlal Nehru at once placed him in charge of the Labour Research Department of the Indian National Congress. A few months later Jayaprakash found himself Acting General Secretary of the Congress during the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932.

History will love to remember his days of imprisonment in the Nasik Jail. Along with him were a large number of prominent Congress workers. Masani was there, so was Achyut Patwardhan, Ashok Mehta, N. G. Gore, S. M. Joshi, Prof. M. L. Dantwala.

These and other friends worked out the blue-prints of the Congress Socialist Party that was to be. In other jails, likewise, the younger sections of Congressmen dissatisfied

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with the decay that had crept into Congress politics, felt the need of a more dynamic orientation in the outlook and programme of the Congress and had reached Socialist conclusions.

Soon after his release, Jayaprakash organised the first session of the All-India Congress Socialist Conference at Patna which met under the Presidentship of Acharya Narendra Dev. The occasion was significant, for the All-India Congress Committee was meeting at the same time to call a halt to the programme of Civil Disobedience and to launch out on Parliamentary activities. It was in the fitness of things that the Left Wing also should organise its forces to prevent this drift to the Right. Jayaprakash was elected General Secretary of the Organising Committee. In the coming months he worked ceaselessly, travelling from province to province, gathering together the radical elements and setting up Congress Socialist groups everywhere. A few months later the All-India Congress Socialist Party was formed at Bombay. Jayaprakash continued to be the General Secretary of the Party till he was made a member of the Congress Working Committee at Lucknow. He resigned from the Congress Cabinet a few months later, to resume the General Secretaryship of the Party.

On the eve of the Ramgarh Congress Jayaprakash was suddenly arrested for a 'seditious' speech at Jamshedpur. He proudly admitted his "guilt" and was sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment. On release he was again re-arrested at the jail-gate!

After some time, he was transferred to the far away Concentration Camp at Deoli, well over a thousand miles from his home. Weeks grew into months and months into years, till ultimately things became so intolerable, that all the politicals held in detention there resolved upon a fast unto death, to secure the redress of their grievances. The memorable hunger-strike at Deoli led by Jayaprakash, roused the whole country. A wave of indignation swept over the entire land as the condition of the hunger-strikers

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grew worse from day to day. Faced with the certain prospect of their death on its hands the foreign government gracelessly yielded after the ordeal had lasted for no less than thirty-one days. The health of many of these brave comrades had been gravely affected. Jayaprakash, whom the bureaucracy had in particular sought to discredit by the publication of a letter said to be seized from him, emerged from the trial as a hero. Gandhi's magnificent reply to the government in connection with this letter will long be remembered.

The 'Quit India' Movement found him still in prison. He had been transferred from Deoli to Hazaribagh Central Jail in Bihar. With revolution outside he found jail unbearable. One morning the people woke to find that Jayaprakash with four other companions had escaped from prison. This was one of the greatest sensations of 1942 Revolution. His daring and initiative made things most difficult for the British. A prize of Rs. 5,000/- was announced for his capture. Later it was raised to Rs. 10,000/-.

A still greater sensation was caused some time later, by the news of the capture of Jayaprakash and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia in Nepal, followed immediately by their rescue by revolutionary guerillas, with the only too willing support of the people at large. This was a great blow at the prestige of the Government and Jayaprakash and Lohia became wellnigh legendary figures.

Events were putting an almost break-neck strain on him—the hunted life, extraordinary conditions of work, nights without sleep. His health completely broke down. At this time he was arrested in the Punjab. Government held him in such terror that for a long time even his whereabouts were kept a strictly guarded secret. Stories of torture and third degree methods caused great anxiety among the people. To ascertain the facts proceedings under Habeas Corpus were filed by Mrs. Purnima Bannerji before the Lahore High Court. To foil this move the authorities declared him to be a State Prisoner under Regulation III of 1818

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and thus outside the jurisdiction of the High Court! When the Habeas Corpus petition was dismissed on this very ground, namely, that he was a State Prisoner and thus outside the purview of the Court, the alien Government made him a Security Prisoner once again! Thus are Law and Order maintained in this country!

The victory of the Labour Party in the General Elections apparently seemed to have made no impression on the British administrative steel-frame in India. What a reflection—that a Socialist Government in power in England should keep the All-India Congress Socialist Party under a ban of illegality and its General Secretary and other leading lights into prison without even a trial! That was the thought uppermost in the minds of all.

The arrival of the British Cabinet Mission, consisting of Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Secretary of State for India, Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, and Mr. A. V. Alexander, First Lord of Admiralty, for political discussions in this country, provided a fresh diversion. Quite a number of political prisoners and detenus were set free but not Jayaprakash and Lohia. According to press reports, Sir John Thorne, Home Member of the Government of India twice interviewed them in the Agra Central Jail, but came away from there, far from re-assured and more adamant than ever in his determination not to release them.

Meanwhile, from every nook and corner of the country rose the insistent demand for their liberation. Jayaprakash Day and Lohia Day were celebrated at many scores of places. Meetings and demonstrations everywhere proclaimed the veneration in which they were held everywhere. At long last on April 22, 1946 they were set free.

What rejoicing there was all over the country! Crowds, *crowds* everywhere. From small wayside stations to metropolitan centres there was a spontaneous outburst of popular affection. When Jayaprakash arrived in his home

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province of Bihar some days after release, the reception accorded him had no precedent.

Of the various leading workers of the Congress Socialist Party, Jayaprakash is most attracted by theory. But he is no dogmatist. His fingers are firmly on the pulse of the people. He dislikes nothing so much as narrow sectarianism. If the Congress Socialist Party is something more than a political party,—a powerful movement, with a larger and larger section of the radical elements coming under its ideological influence, not a little of the credit is due to Jayaprakash.

As a writer, Jayaprakash is the master of a style that is at once simple and direct. His book, *Why Socialism?*, has been widely acclaimed. As a speaker he is no orator, but by the sheer force of his sincerity and a thorough grasp of the subject he makes a greater impression than most orators.

He has two vices that I can discover. The first is the possession of a magnificent shaving set. With a beaming smile he will tell you that it is the finest in the town. When one has a face as handsome as Jayaprakash's this may be pardoned!

I do not know how to describe the other, unless I call it a lack of the time sense—for to call it merely unpunctuality, would be prosaic. The fact is, that Jayaprakash loves a good discussion, especially with an intelligent opponent, and will miss half a dozen appointments to do so. But at those times when he comes late, such genuine misery is written on his face, that he seems to endear himself all the more by his very unpunctuality!

Jayaprakash is still young, but he has a fund of knowledge and experience that few people in this country can lay claim to. Gentle as he is, he can be firm and has shown that he has the courage to make big decisions. Above all, it is the human qualities of the man that cast a spell on all those who come near him. Such is Jayaprakash, unassum-

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ing, generous to a fault, honest as the day, working for a tomorrow with the materials of today. This simple peasant lad, born in the tiny village of Sitabdiara in the Saran District of Bihar, saw a tram car for the first time when he was nineteen years old. Today, he is one of the guiding spirits of a movement with which the future of this country is inextricably bound up.

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I

THE REVOLUTION OF 1942

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THE REVOLUTION OF 1942

I

To All Fighters of Freedom

LETTER No. 1

[Jayaprakash after his escape from the Hazaribagh Central Jail in October 1942 toured the country. After studying the situation he issued his famous Letter to Fighters of Freedom early in 1943.—Editor].

Revolutionary Greetings,
Comrades,

LET me first of all offer you and those comrades who have been made prisoners of war my heartiest congratulations on the magnificent battle already given to the enemy. Nothing like it ever happened or was expected to happen in this our long suffering and suppressed country. It truly was the "Open Rebellion" envisaged by our incomparable leader, Mahatma Gandhi.

The Rebellion, no doubt, seems to have been suppressed for the moment. But I hope, you will agree with me that it has been suppressed only for the moment. This should cause us no surprise. As a matter of fact, had the very first assault been successful and had it completely crushed imperialism, that in reality would have been a matter of surprise. The very fact that the enemy himself has admitted that the Rebellion came pretty near destroying his power, shows how successful was the first phase of our National Revolution.

And how was the first phase suppressed? Was it the Military power of the enemy, his unmitigated reign of

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goondaism, looting, arson and murder that did the job? No. It is wrong to consider the "Revolt" as having been "suppressed". The history of all Revolutions shows that a Revolution is not an event. It is a phase, a social process. And during the evolution of a revolution, tides and ebbs are normal. Our Revolution is at present going through the period of low water, so soon rather than rise to higher heights and go from victory to victory, not because the superior physical force of the Imperialist aggressors intervened, but because of two important reasons.

Firstly *there was no efficient organisation* of the national revolutionary forces that could function and give effective lead to the mighty forces that were released. The Congress, though a great organisation, was not tuned to the pitch to which revolution was to rise. The lack of organisation was so considerable that even important congressmen were not aware of the progress of the Revolt, and till late in course of the rising it remained a matter of debate in accordance with the Congress programme. In the same connection should be mentioned the regrettable fact that quite a considerable number of influential Congressmen failed to attune their mental attitude to spirit of this "last fight for freedom". The earnestness, the urgency, the determination that marked the attitude of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Rajendra Prasad or Sardar Patel failed to reflect in the minds and hearts of all Congress leaders.

Secondly, *after the first phase* of the Rising was over *there was no further programme* placed before the people. After they had completely destroyed the British Raj in their areas, the people considered their task fulfilled, and went back to their homes not knowing what more to do. Nor was it their fault. The failure was ours; we should have supplied them with a programme for the next phase. When this was not done, the Revolt came to a standstill and the phase of the ebb began. This situation was created many days before the British soldiers arrived in sufficient

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numbers to push back yet further the receding works of the revolt. What programme should have been placed before the people in the second phase? The answer is suggested by the nature of revolutions. A revolution is not only a destructive process, it is at the same time a great constructive force. No revolution could succeed if it only destroyed. If it should survive, it must create an authority to replace the one it has destroyed. Our Revolution too having accomplished over large territories of the country the negative task of destruction, called for a positive programme. The people who destroyed the objects and means of administration of the foreign power and drove away its agents should have set up in their areas their own units of Revolutionary Government and created their own police and militia. Had this been done, it would have released such an unprecedented volume of energy and opened up such a vast field for constructive work that the waves of the Revolution would have mounted higher and higher till—if the rising was countrywide—the imperialist power had been broken and the people had seized supreme authority throughout the land.

The lack of efficient organisation and of a complete programme of National Revolution: these were two causes of the downward course of the first phase of the present Revolution.

The question now is what are our present tasks? First, to banish all depression from our minds and those of the people, and create an atmosphere of joy instead at the success achieved and of hope for success in the future.

Second, we must keep steadfastly before our minds and of the people the nature of this Revolution. It is our last fight for freedom. Our objective can, therefore, be nothing but victory. There can be no half way houses. The efforts that men like Rajagopalachari are making for the establishment of National Government are not only fruitless but positively harmful in as much as they distract public attention from the real issues. There is no compromise

between the slogans of "Quit India" and of "National Government". Those who are running after the slogan of Congress-League unity are merely serving the ends of imperialist propaganda. It is not the lack of unity that is obstructing the formation of a national government, but the natural unwillingness of imperialism to liquidate itself. Mr. Churchill left no manner of doubt about it, when he declared recently that he had not assumed the office of the King's first minister to preside over the liquidation of the Empire. He would be a foolish student of society indeed who expected empires to wither away of their own accord. Those erstwhile "revolutionaries" who are attempting today to wish away the Indian Empire by the cataclysmic force of humble memorials are making of themselves the most pitiable fools of history.

It is not the unity of all the important elements in Indian life, to quote the imperialist jargon, that is the need of the hour but the unity of all the national revolutionary forces. And these are already united under the flag of the Congress. Unity between the League and the Congress does not foreshadow the growth of these forces, but their absolute relation, for the League cannot conceivably tread the path of revolution and freedom.

The complete overthrow of imperialism, then, is our objective and we must keep this steadfastly in view. There can be no compromise on this issue. Either we win or we lose. And lose we shall not. Not only because we are determined ceaselessly to work for victory, but also because powerful world forces are drawing the doom of imperialism and fascism ever nearer and nearer. Do not believe that the formal results of this war settled laboriously at the Peace Conference would settle the fate of the post-war world. War is a strange alchemist, and in its hidden chambers are such forces and powers brewed and distilled that they tear down the plans of the victorious and vanquished alike. No peace conference at the end of the last war decided that four mighty Empires of Europe

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and Asia should fall into dust—the Russian, the German, the Austrian and Ottoman. Nor, was the Russian, the German, the Turkish revolution decreed by Lloyd George, Clemenceau or Wilson.

Throughout the world where men are fighting, dying and suffering today, the alchemist is at work, just as he is in India, where he has already let loose a mighty social upheaval. Neither Churchill nor Roosevelt, neither Hitler nor Tojo will determine the fate of the world at the end of this war. It is force such as we represent that will fulfil that historic task. Can we doubt that revolutionary forces are stirring everywhere? Can we believe that millions of people are undergoing unutterable suffering without a thought for the future? Can we believe that millions are satisfied with the lies that their rulers daily feed them with? No, it cannot be so.

Having therefore definitely fixed our vision on the goal of total victory, we have to march ahead. What concretely must we do? What does a general do when he loses or wins a battle? He consolidates and prepares for the next battle. Rommel stopped at El Alamein after his great victory to consolidate and prepare. Alexander too prepared and he turned his serious defeat into a resounding victory. Ours was not even a defeat. We really won the first round of the fight in as much as over large territories of the country the civil rule of the British aggressor was completely uprooted. The masses have now learnt from experience that the imposing edifice of the police and magistracy and law courts and prisons which goes by the name of British Raj is but a house of cards when they hurl against either collective power. This lesson is not likely to be forgotten and it constitutes the starting point for the next offensive.

Our third and most important task then at the present moment is to prepare for the next major offensive. Perhaps organisation, discipline ourselves—these are our present watch-words.

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The next offensive? When do we expect to launch the next offensive? Some people think that the masses will not rise again for the next five or six years. This estimate might be true of peace time but it does not hold good for a stormy war-torn world of fast moving events. The savage tyrannies of the British fascists—the Linlithgows, the Hallets, the Stewarts and the myriads of others and their base Indian Lackeys—may have compelled the people to lie low for the present, but they have nowhere converted them into friends of the oppressors. The whole countryside, where this British type of Nazi Hell was let loose, is seething with the most intense discontent, anger and thirst for revenge. The people have merely to understand that *powerful preparations are afoot* to take courage again and to enter the plans and schemes of the next offensive, with active, co-ordinated and disciplined work; it would be wholly favourable for the next assault. International events may come to our aid. Then there is Gandhiji's ever impending fast unto death, a constant reminder to us and to the people not to slacken, not to waver, not to rest on the oars.

The question of the next offensive is linked up with the question of the positive task of the Revolution—i.e., the establishment of the units of the Revolutionary Governments. With latter question is bound up the question of violence and maintained armed forces. I wish, therefore, to place before you my view on this question, as to my mind it affects vitally the future of our Revolution.

First of all, I feel I must say a few words about the noise, the British authorities have made about the violence committed in the course of this Revolution. There was some violence indeed under extreme provocation, but it was remarkably little as compared with the magnitude of the rising and the staggering manifestation of individual and collective non-violence. It is not realised, perhaps, that thousands of British and Indian employees of the foreign power were for some days literally at the mercy of the

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masses, who took compassion of their foes and spared them their lives and property. And what of the cool, sublime courage of those thousands of young and old who received the enemy's bullets on their chests with the flag of revolution in their hands and "Inqlab Zindabad" on their lips? Have the British a word of praise for this godly courage?

In any case is it not remarkable that the British power which is soaked in violence, which is based on violence, which daily commits the most pitiless forms of violence, which grinds down millions of people and sucks their life-blood should make so much noise about the violence that others commit? How are the British concerned with what weapons we chose to fight them with? Have they pledged non-violence if the rebels adhere to it? Have they not already shot down thousands of our non-violent soldiers? Whatever weapons we use the British have only bullets for us and looting and rape and arson. So let them keep quiet as to how we fight them, it is our business entirely to decide that.

Coming to the question as it affects us, I would first remind you of the difference between Gandhiji's views on non-violence and those of the Working Committee and the A.-I.C.C. Gandhiji is in no event prepared to depart from non-violence. With him it is a question of faith and life-principle. Not so with the Congress. Then Congress has stated repeatedly during this war that if India became free, or even if a national government were set up, it would be prepared to resist aggression with arms. But, if we are prepared to fight Japan and Germany with arms, why must we refuse to fight Britain in the same manner? The only possible answer can be that the Congress in power could have an army, whereas the Congress in wilderness has none. But *supposing a revolutionary army were created or if the present Indian army or a part of it rebel, would it not be inconsistent for us first to ask the army to rebel and then*

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to ask the rebels to lay down arms and face British bullets with bared chest?

I should add that I have no hesitation in admitting that non-violence of the brave, if practised on a sufficiently large scale, would make violence unnecessary, but where such non-violence is absent, I should not allow cowardice, clothed in Shastric subtleties, to block the development of this revolution and lead to its failure.

With the implication of the last phase of the revolution clear in our minds, *we have to prepare, organise, train and discipline our forces*. In everything we do, we have constantly to bear in mind that ours is not to be merely a conspiratorial action. It is total revolt of the masses that is our objective. So, along with our immense technical work, we must do intensive work among the masses—peasants in the villages and the workers in the factories, mines, railways, and elsewhere. We must do ceaseless propaganda among them and help them in their present difficulties, organise them to fight for their present demands, recruit from them selected soldiers for our various activities and train them technically and politically. With training a few may succeed where thousands failed before. In every fiska and taluka and thana, in every considerable factory and workshop or other industrial centres, we must have a band of militants, mentally and materially equipped for the next rising.

Then there is our work *in the Indian Army and the Services*. There is agitational and demonstrative work. There is work in the schools and colleges and in the market place. There is the work in the Native States and on the frontiers of India. It is not possible for me here to describe our preparations more concretely. Let it suffice to say that there is tremendous work to be done and work for every one. Much is being done at present, but vastly more remains to be done.

Who but youth can accomplish all this? Is it too much to hope that our students who have set such a brilliant

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record already will follow up their achievements and vindicate the promise they have given? It is for the students themselves to answer.

I should make it clear that preparation does not mean that fighting entirely ceases for the moment. No "skirmishes". "Frontier activities", "minor clashing", "snipping", "patrolling"—all this must go on. These are in themselves a preparation for the offensive.

With full confidence in the people and devotion to the cause, let us, then, march ahead. Let our steps be firm, our hearts resolute and our vision undimmed. The sun of the Indian freedom has already risen above the horizon. Let not the clouds of our own doubts and disputes, inaction and faithlessness, obscure that sun and drown us in our self-created darkness.

In the end, comrades, I should like to say that it has made me inexpressibly happy and proud to be able once again to place my services at your disposal. In serving you, the last words of our leader, "do or die" shall be my guiding star, your command, my pleasure.

Somewhere in India

JAYA PRAKASH NARAYAN.

2

To All Fighters of Freedom

LETTER No. 2

[Months back, soon after my escape from the enemy's prison, I had the privilege of placing before you my views on our National Revolution as also certain suggestions concerning it. Six months have passed since then, and as the saying goes, much water has flown under the bridges. I think therefore, that it will be fruitful to review the past months and to examine the present stage of our struggle.—Jayaprakash]

(I)

AFTER a close contact with the progress of the Revolution for the past half year, I find no cause to change the views I had formed at the very beginning, nor do I find that the analysis made in my last letter requires any vital modifications, except in one respect, not of a vital nature, yet important.

In December last it appeared to me that it might be possible within a few months for another mass uprising to take place. That rising has not yet materialised, and it has to be admitted, does not appear to be immediately imminent. The question naturally arises how this fact affects our present policy and the course of our struggle. In order to be able to answer this question, it is necessary to probe a little into this failure of the masses to rise again.

First of all it seems to me that it would be a mistake to deduce from this that the spirit of the people has been crushed or that there is no fight left in them. The people never hated British rule as they do to-day and were never

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more determined to be rid of it. A certain amount of demoralization undoubtedly exists to day, but it is found largely, I do not say wholly, in the cities and among the higher strata of the society. In the countryside, the areas where the repression had full sway, are far from having been cowed down, they are on the contrary filled with a burning desire for vengeance. At the first suitable opportunity they will rise and tear up British rule to pieces. It is rather the people of those villages who escaped British goondaism that sometimes show symptoms of fright and a tendency to save their skin at any cost. But I believe these people too could be persuaded to march abreast of their brethren when the final hour approaches. The students who played a notable part in the first rising are, it is true, back at their schools and colleges. But from what I have been able to gather, they are far from being dispirited, and would be ready again to place themselves at the head of a rising. The growing severity of the food situation, the increasing hardships of living, and the steadily falling real wages have not induced labour to look kindly at the so-called war efforts, and were another 'open rebellion' to break out, labour's contribution to it might not be less, but more than it was in August-September last. The lower ranks of the Police forces, though apparently won back to loyalty to the usurper regime, are far from satisfied with it and would prove much less reliable in the event of another rising than they did in 1942. The discontent among the officers and ranks of the Indian Armed forces has grown rather than lessened with the progress of the war; nor the new schemes regarding salaries etc., of the new Commander-in-Chief are likely to allay it.

It may be asked why, if this picture be true has not a second rising broken out, and why is it not even an imminent possibility. The reason, to my mind, is to be found in the intangible psychological factors. These factors are often unpredictable though it is one of the tasks of leader-

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ship to assess them properly. One of the essential conditions, though not the only one, is the rise of a belief in the mass mind that the ruling class or power is played out and at the end of its tether. The course of the world war in the months immediately prior to last August had been such that the Indian people had come to believe that the British Empire was crumbling and they had but to deal it a blow for it to totter entirely to the ground. At the present moment and for some time past, this psychological background has been absent, or rather altered so as to become an inhibiting instead of a stimulating factor. To all appearances the Americans seem destined to save the British Empire and piece together the fallen parts. As a matter of fact, the dissolution of the doomed Empire goes apace as certainly as ever—and strange though it may appear, the Americans are not without their share in it, for they cannot fail to acquire the first mortgage over the territories they “liberate”. But this process is not visible to the naked eye and so an inhibition is created in the mass mind.

This inhibition can be removed under two conditions either when the international situation improves, i.e., when it goes against the British Empire, or when an organised revolutionary force by dealing sustained and continuous blows at the enemy assures the mass mind that the British in spite of a huge army, are powerless in the face of a *Rebellious India* and arouses in it the hope that an uprising would possess a powerful leadership and a fair chance of success.

In August last not only did the war situation contribute to the creation of a suitable psychological atmosphere but also the fact that the Congress stood in all its power at the head of the people. The people had faith in their leaders and when the call went forth they responded with confidence and enthusiasm. Today these leaders are in prison and they must present an appearance of helplessness to the people. Thus the second element in the crea-

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tion of a mass psychology of the rebellion is also absent to-day.

But while it is not in our power to provide the first element, we can and should remedy the situation in respect of the second. A tendency is growing amongst fighters to take shelter from activity behind the idle complaint that the masses do not move, do not respond. This is defeatism. The masses cannot move till there is force in us to move them. They cannot respond, they cannot follow us till we are able by our activities, and the strength and efficiency of our organization to win their confidence. The masses did their duty once. It was we who were found wanting. They shall do their duty again provided we do ours. In August last the masses had before their eyes the concrete power of the Congress and the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. To-day if they are made to feel that they are left alone, that there is no organised force in the country, which remains undefeated and continues the struggle, they would naturally sink down into despair and resign themselves to their Kismet.

The present, therefore, is a stage primarily for the enlisted soldiers of Revolution, the irreconcilable fighters of freedom to act in. They must strengthen their organization and carry ceaseless war unto the enemy. No suffering, no sacrifice should be counted too great; no controversy, no temptation, no false hope should deflect our course. All avenues of struggle are open to us. Whatever be our faiths and creeds, whatever our methods and weapons, our course is clear. We must keep on fighting. Whether we fight a year or ten years should make no difference to us. The Americans fought their war of Independence for seven years, the Chinese have just entered the seventh year of their war of liberation. We have but completed our first year of fighting. During the American and Chinese wars there were moments when all seemed to be lost, but the leaders and men held on, and victory was eventually with the Americans, as it will be with the

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Chinese. The present is far from being the darkest moment of our struggle, and yet weaklings and cowards have dared raise their voice. These are traitors to their country and we must chuck them out of our way, and march on. Worse times may be in store for us, but let hardship and suffering not deter us but harden us. Then shall we be worthy of the people's confidence, then they shall respond to our call.

(II)

For some months past, particularly since the correspondence between Gandhiji and Viceroy was published, a controversy has sprung up among fighters on the question of violence and non-violence. My views on this question have been clearly stated in my first letter to you and I still adhere to them. There is no need to repeat what I have already said, but I should like to say a word or two about this controversy. To me a controversy on this issue at this stage seems meaningless. Every fighter for freedom is free to choose his own method. Those who believe in similar methods should work together as a disciplined group. And the least that those who follow a different path should do is not to come in the way of one another and waste their energies in mutual recrimination. Where "Do or Die" is the *mantram* of action, there is no room for recrimination whatever. Those who believe in non-violence may harbour the fear that those who practise violence might compromise the position of Gandhiji. That fear is unfounded. Gandhiji's adherence to non-violence is so complete, his position in respect to it so clear, that not a hundred thousand Churchills and Amerys will be able to compromise him. Also, we must remember, that whatever we do, however we try, we can never prevent British statesmen whether Tory or Labour, from telling lies; for lies are one of the central pillars of the Empire. Remember also that if there is violence in India no one but the British Government itself is responsible for it.

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Another controversy that has been started since the publication of the Gandhi-Viceroy correspondence is whether the present struggle was started by the Congress and whether it can be called a Congress movement. It has been claimed by some, who have gone so far as to suggest that a rump A.I.C.C. should meet to withdraw the Bombay Resolution, that since Gandhiji and other Congress leaders were arrested before they could make a formal declaration of war, this struggle is not a Congress struggle at all. According to the logic of this argument no struggle, if the British were to arrest the leaders in time, could ever have the formal authority and sanction of the Congress. What is it that those who deny the authority of the Congress to the struggle would desire to have happened on the 9th of August after the cowardly attack on our leaders? What do they think was the desire of Mahatma Gandhi and the Working Committee in the event of their arrest? Would the detractors of the present struggle have been happy if there had been no reaction to the arrest of the leaders, if the Country had calmly bowed its head before the imperialist jack-boot? Or was it expected that only protest meetings should have been held demanding the release of arrested leaders (as was advocated by certain erstwhile Revolutionaries), and when they were not released, further meetings should have been held, till the audience became too disgusted to attend, after which the "protestants" could have gone to sleep with a clear conscience? If this be so, where was the sense of that brave revolution and those brave words that were poured forth from the lips of the greatest in the land at the Bombay A.I.C.C.? If on the other hand this be not so, and if the people were expected to rise in answer to the British offensive, if, indeed, the arrest of the leaders was a signal for a mass struggle, then where is the grace and fairness in decrying the present struggle as un-congress and un-authorised? When you are on the war path, it is foolish to expect the enemy to allow you the leisure to complete all the formalities required by

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a peace-time constitution. It therefore appears to me to be mean and cowardly to attempt to show that the National struggle that started on that 9th of August, 1942, has not the authority and sanction of the Congress.

It is a different matter when we turn to the question whether the programme of the present struggle was authorised by Gandhiji or the Working Committee. Here we are in the realm of facts and not principles, and political ethics. And about the facts there is no dispute. It is well known that the Working Committee had not prepared a plan of action but merely requested Gandhiji to assume command of the struggle. Gandhiji in his turn had also no plan of action. He had sketched the merest outlines in his address to the A.I.C.C. That outline and his articles in the *Harijan* were all that the people had before them and they formed the basis of that detailed programme which was prepared by those Congressmen who were left behind, and who hastily met in Bombay to lay foundations of that "illegal" Congress organization which has functioned since then. That programme still is the framework of the National Struggle. There is no room for murder in it, nor for any form of violence to the person. If murders were committed in India as they were, 99 per cent of them were acts of the British fascists and hooligans and not more than 1 per cent were of an infuriated and sorely tried people. Creation of deadlock and paralysing and dislocation of British rule by all non-violent means was and remains the sheet-anchor of that programme and "go to the fullest extent under Ahimsa" the star to steer it by. While it is true that there are some who in the name of non-violence are attempting to disown certain parts of the programme, which they had themselves sanctioned previously and which even such a high authority as Shree Kishorelal Mashruwala did not have the heart to condemn or ask the people to desist from, there is no doubt that the conscious basis of the programme which the Congress organizations have followed since August 1942 has been non-violence, as

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interpreted by the people in authority during this period. They who prepared the programme have never disowned the responsibility; and when the time comes they will no doubt appear before the tribunal of the Congress and receive its commendation for having discharged their duty at a most critical moment.

Be that as it may, to fasten the August programme on Gandhiji is a piece of perjury of which only the British ruling class can be capable.

(III)

In the past couple of months there has been in evidence a symptom which bodes greater mischief than these controversies. Since the beginning of the struggle there has been a group of Indians who have deplored the step taken at Bombay and attempted in their wonted manner to "resolve the deadlock". I do not think Congressmen were ever concerned about them, nor need they be now. Every time India launches a fight for freedom this group sets out to "resolve the deadlock". The fact that men like Shris Rajagopalachari, Bhulabhai Desai, K. M. Munshi, whose rightful place was in the midst of fighters, have joined the association of saboteurs of the freedom movement, should make no difference.

But, as time passes and fighters are released from prison, some among them—a very few now doubt—show signs of fatigue and demoralization. They too have taken up the slogan, "resolve the deadlock"; and different proposals to effect this are set afoot by them.

Firstly, it is highly disloyal of these Congressmen to initiate a policy of retreat when the generals are in the firing line. A real sense of discipline is tested in action. At the stage of discussion, criticism and difference of opinion are the law of the democratic life. But at the time of action, particularly in war, the strictest discipline is necessary. And discipline requires in the present instance that every Congressman should remain in the firing line and give no thought to retreat or surrender. It is for the

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generals to consider these issues. Mahatmaji and Maulana Azad are in jail, but in the matter of peace and war the initiative is still with them, as it always is with either side at war. Mahatmaji could easily "resolve the deadlock" whenever he wanted by surrendering. He has not elected to do so. This means that he wanted the fight to continue or to put it at the worst, the deadlock to continue.

Secondly, let us go a little deeper into this question of the so-called deadlock. It would be conceded by everybody that ending of the deadlock is not an end in itself. It must mean an advancement of the national cause; it must take us a step further towards the goal that is unalterably ours.

Keeping this in mind we may proceed to examine the ways to bring the deadlock to an end. There are three possibilities; either we force the British Government to concede our demands, or we surrender, or there is a "negotiated peace" between India and Britain—a compromise. The first would mean a complete victory for India and could clearly be brought about only by the method of struggle. Those who have lost all hope of victory and feel suffocated by the stalemate and yearn for the freedom of parliamentary play-acting have the option of surrendering. But they would thereby most effectively kill the Congress and extinguish the spirit of resistance for at least a generation. That would be a complete victory for Britain.

We are left with the possibility of a compromise the superficial attraction of which draws many well-meaning people into its snare and the path to which, as to a well-known place, is already paved with a great many excellent intentions. A compromise implies give and take on either side. Now, the least gains on the side of the Congress can be the release of all those imprisoned in connection with the national struggle and restoration of the status of "legality" to the Congress and its ancillary bodies. The least that Britain can gain is removal of the terrible strain that

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British administration has to bear due to the continuance of the struggle. It is my conviction that in this sort of a compromise British stands to gain everything and the Congress to lose much.

Let us picture the implications of such a compromise. What would be the Congress position with regard to the war? Nothing has happened since August of last year to cause Congress to change its views of the war or to induce it to join it unless it is in a position to wage the war in the interest of the Indian people and on their behalf. On the other hand, an awful deal has happened in the past year that would make it impossible for any self-respecting Congressman to be associated in any manner, official or otherwise, with the goondas and cut-throats who rule India and who let loose such a hell over the heads of the people—a hell the fires of which have not yet been extinguished. It is inconceivable to me how Congressmen can ever offer the plan to men who have murdered and pillaged and burnt and raped and tortured tender boys in the stillness of prison cells. For this reason and for the reason that Congress cannot accept office in the present circumstances without power, I cannot imagine that the Congress would agree to work the 1935 Constitution again. Congress had once agreed to work that Constitution in order to wreck it and had nearly wrecked itself in the attempt. That wretched fraud has, however, been most effectively wrecked by the war and, as the memorable statement of Maulvi Fazlul Huq to the Bengal Legislative Assmblly showed, not a shred of provincial autonomy remains to hide the ugly nakedness of bureaucratic rule. (Parenthetically let me remark that it is a pity that after so ably exposing the hollowness of provincial autonomy Maulvi Huq and other nationalist members of the Bengal Assembly, including those who sail under one or the other Congress flag, should persist in playing at futile parliamentarism. To my mind the only manly and patriotic course open to them after that great statement was to walk out permanently of the

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present Assembly and have recourse to extra-parliamentary methods to seek to overthrow the monstrous Herbert regime.) To return to my point. Provincial Autonomy being what it is, it would be the height of political imbecility to expect the Congress to resuscitate that fraud by installing its ministers again in the provinces. The Act of 1935 is dead and there is no going back to it: let this be well understood. Nor can India live at peace again with those who have heaped unspeakable indignities and bestial cruelties upon her: let this too be well understood.

A compromise with such implications would put the Congress in a most embarrassing position. The Congress would be restored to "freedom"; but would continue to be opposed to the imperialist war and to all the measures,—economic and political, that the usurper power might adopt to prosecute the war in the interest of British capitalism; it would be unable to take a hand in the administration of the country and to democratise in the least the ordinance, or to use the modern phrase, fascist rule; it would be helpless to alleviate the sufferings of the people, to provide food for the hungry, cloth for the naked, shelter for the homeless. In short, if the Congress took its principles seriously it would find itself drifting into opposition to the usurper authority at every point. The deadlock would have been resolved in vain.

The Congress would suffer another great loss. As soon as Mahatma Gandhi, President Azad, Pandit Nehru and others are out of prison the world would forget India. The pressure that the deadlock exercises over those who guide the destinies of the world would be suddenly relaxed and the Churchills and Amerys would go peacefully to sleep—rightly thinking that the India question was settled for the time being and would not become pressing again till the mad Gandhi took into his head to march his flock once more to the prison. Pandit Nehru released from the jail might make statements which American correspondents might lap up with avidity, but there would be no strength

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behind those statements, despite the beauty and grace of their expression. Nehru imprisoned is a greater problem for the Roosevelts and Churchills than Nehru proliferating nobly worded statements and casting his spell over the envoys of great nations.

It might be suggested that the basis of compromise might be more advantageous to the Congress than that pictured above. Let us see what this basis can be. Britain is not prepared to offer anything more than the Cripps plan—that is, no power during the war and a fraudulent promise of it at its end. The Congress rightly rejected the British offer, and no one in his senses would expect Congress to accept it to-day. The most moderate demands of the Congress, with which I personally am not in the least in agreement and which I doubt if the Working Committee would be prepared to father today, were placed in the hands of the "Devil's advocate" in April 1942. They were rejected by the British Government. How do those, who are anxious to break the stalemate, propose to enforce those minimum demands, supposing the Congress would be satisfied with them? Could anything but a struggle succeed? So, it appears we are back to the deadlock again.

The deadlock is thus inescapable. Its resolution, except on the terms of the Congress, spells disaster to the country. It however, does not mean that we are static. We remain at war, we continue to resist, to exploit every shift in the national and international position. The very continuance of opposition to the British rule, the very fact that India's best men are in prison is a guarantee that India remains unbeaten, the spirit of resistance remains unbowed, that the Indian question remains a crying world problem, that the subject peoples of Asia and Africa draw inspiration from India's struggle, that the working classes of Britain and the allied nations are constantly made aware of the nature of "democracy" for which they are said to fight, that the possibility of a better post-war world is brought near, that India gains the leadership of the third

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camp of the common men of the world for whom neither Allied nor Axis-victory holds any prospects of liberation and happiness. I shall therefore be content even if the deadlock continues till the end of the war. None can tell how long the war may last and what turn it may take and what forces it may release. The longer the war lasts, the more the internal situation deteriorates, not only in India but in every country of the world. A turn in the war, the release of a new social force may alter the situation so completely in India that the deadlock may become the starting point of a great leap forward, whereas if we have gone back to "normalcy" again the normalcy itself might become for us a deadly fetter. The deadlock is the best guarantee of our success in the future.

It might be urged that by keeping alive the deadlock we are playing into the hands of Britain, for Britain too desires that there should be a political deadlock in India. This is a mis-reading of British policy. Britain does not desire a political deadlock but a political black-out. She wants to crush the Congress and still its voice, to break the people's spirit of resistance and will to freedom. A deadlock in which the power of the Congress grows, the spirit of resistance remains unbroken, the right for freedom continues; a deadlock as a result of which British prestige and authority daily dwindle and those of the rebels grow—such a deadlock would defeat Britain's purpose and turn her weapon into an instrument of her own defeat.

(IV)

Closely connected with the above discussion is the question of a national government and Congress-League agreement. A national government by all means. But the most amusing thing is that while Congress fights for such a government and suffers others merely talk. If a national government is not the same thing as coalition ministries under the Act of 1935 or a glorified Viceroy's Council, it cannot be won by holding conferences. The Congress left

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that futile path years ago and if communists expect to establish such a Government by petitioning to their imperial masters, they are welcome to their toading. But they will achieve nothing but the ridicule of the people and the contempt of their pay-masters.

The agitation for a Congress-League agreement as a pre-condition of a national government is not new and there was no reason for me to touch upon it here. But the depression that has caught some Congressmen who have been seeking a way back to constitutionalism has led them anew into this barren agitation. Becoming weary of direct action, they are eager to fall back on this easy nostrum, forgetting that the author of the agitation, Mr. Rajagopalachari, is still cooling his heels before the gates of Mr. Jinnah's mansion, and that Mahatma Gandhi's letter to the League leader still remains undelivered. (Though we have had the rare fortune of reading the reply to an undelivered and unread letter.) I have for this reason considered it desirable to touch upon this subject briefly.

One is compelled to pay a tribute to the skill of British propaganda when one observes how intelligent men fall a prey to it. Either that, or one must acknowledge the depth of national degeneracy which we have reached. If British propaganda "takes in" the innocent Americans (though even among them there are quite a few who see through it), one can understand, but when it bamboozles an Indian, you have to regard it as one of the world's wonders. Recent events in India have torn Britain's every pretence to shreds. Not even a fig leaf hides now the true shape and purpose of British Imperialism. Yet, there are Indians who believe and want their countrymen to believe that nothing but the absence of a Congress-League settlement stands in the way of India achieving her independence.

If the course of British policy in the past few months has established anything it is the grim determination to hold on at any cost to their Indian Empire. If any point emerged with undimmed clarity from the Cripps Negotia-

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tions it was the firm resolve of Britain not to hand over real power to India during the war, no matter what measure of unity was achieved in the country. Cripps stated categorically that even if the Congress and Muslim League jointly demanded a real National Government, responsible to the people, it could not be granted during the war. (And who was or is interested in British promises for the future?) In view of this clear statement of British policy, to agitate for a Congress-League agreement serves no other purpose but to lend strength and respectability to the lies which the Churchills and Amerys tirelessly peddle around the world. The agitation for Congress-League understanding becomes in these circumstances a part of the imperialist offensive against nationalist India.

It might be asked: even if Congress-League settlement does not by itself compel Britain to grant India a National Government, would it not at least strengthen the forces of freedom and, as such, is it not desirable in itself and worth working for? The conclusion would be true were so the premise. But the premise is entirely untrue. In our country the only forces of freedom are those that are ready to fight and suffer for freedom. The Muslim League during its entire career has not once taken the path of struggle and suffering, nor is it ready to take the path today. India cannot win her freedom without fighting for it. And when the Muslim League is not prepared to participate in the fight, a settlement with it in no way strengthens the forces of freedom. Pandit Nehru was not using empty word when he stated that it would have been easy any day to settle with the League were it prepared to join the struggle for freedom.

So much for the Congress-League unity. A word about the real politik of the League. It is necessary to grasp clearly that the League is in league with Britain. Mr. Jinnah is a deliberate traitor to his country, a Mir Jaffer of the present day. He believes that he can get what he wants from Britain. But Britain is not accustomed to

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handing over parcels of her Empire to its tools. There is no doubt that after she has made the full use of Mr. Jinnah she will throw him into the dust-bin of discarded tools as surely as she has thrown others into it before Mir Jaffer included. Let Muslims remember that it is not the sons of Mir Jaffer who rule Bengal today but the dirty kin of Clive. Mr. Jinnah no doubt considers himself a very clever person, but for all his conceit and Fuehrerian attitudes history will show him to have been made a historic fool.

Mr. Jinnah wants his Pakistan. But if he is serious about it, he must fight for it, he must make sacrifices for it, possibly die for it. But, there is the rub: it is exactly these things which Mr. Jinnah and his followers are never prepared to do. Therefore, Mr. Jinnah shrieks his demand for Pakistan in the face of Mahatma Gandhi. But poor Gandhi is not in possession of Jinnah's sacred homelands. It is the blood-soaked heels of imperialism that possess and trample upon them that defile and desecrate them. The Congress can have no objection if Mr. Jinnah takes his "homelands" from the British at least a part of India would then be free. But he will not take them, for he is not prepared to pay the price. He therefore wants to get along by blackmailing the Congress. But, in the end it will be Churchill who will have blackmailed Jinnah. If India is ever partitioned under the auspices of the Mother of Parliaments it would be in the interest of imperialism not to bestow a separate freedom upon the so-called Muslim nation of Hindustan. Ulster does no good to the Irish, but it is a British knife thrust into the very heart of Fire.

The League's real politik is the ugly issue of imperialist machination and national treachery.

(V)

You probably know that Shri Subhas Chandra Bose has formed a Free Provisional Indian National Government at Shonan (Singapore) which has been recognised by the Japanese Government. He has also organized an

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Indian National Army which is said to be growing rapidly. These events have some significance for us. Parenthetically I may add for your information that one of the first act of the Subhas Government has been to offer to send us as much rice as may be required to feed the starving people of Bengal, but the British Government prefers to let the native vermin die.

It is easy to denounce Subhas as a Quisling. Those who are themselves quislings of Britain find it easiest to denounce him. But nationalist India knows him as a fervent patriot and as one who has always been in the forefront of his country's fight for freedom. It is inconceivable that he should ever be ready to sell his country. No doubt it is true that all the necessary resources of money and equipment that he has, have been supplied to him by the Axis Powers. But in the first place the men he has in his Government and the National Army are Indians who hate British rule and burn with a desire to free their Motherland. In the second place, it is well to remember that the resources of all the fugitive Governments of Europe which bask in the patronage of the United Nations come from those Nations. Thirdly, no one can tell what concessions the requirements of global strategy may force a great power to make to a weak and prostrate nation. The conferment of "independence" upon Burma by the Japanese has received some advertisement and a report says that the Soviet Government has been so much impressed as to congratulate the Tojo Government upon their act of generosity. Be that as it may, there seems to be no doubt that the Burmese today enjoy much more freedom under the overlordship of a fascist state than they did under British "Democracy". Turning to Shri Subhas Bose, it is clear that he has permitted himself to accept aid from enemies in accordance with an age-old political maxim—older than Machiavelli and older than Kautilya. In thus accepting help from a third party he may be deceived in the end, but there can be no question as to the honesty of his pur-

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pose and the scale of his resourcefulness. His success or failure in assisting his country to achieve her freedom will depend on the course of events over which neither her nor any other political leader of any country has much control.

Recognising the importance of the Shonan Indian Government and the National Army, I must emphasise that our freedom largely depends upon our own strength and resources. Hopeless inaction which feeds upon the hope of outside help is suicidal politics. No outside help by itself can free us. It is fantastic to believe that Subhas' army, no matter how large, can defeat the Allied Armies in India. If any army can defeat them it may possibly be the Japanese. But, if the Japanese defeat the British in India, they would not quietly hand over India to us—whatever the understanding between Tojo and Subhas. We must be ready in the event of an Axis-Allied clash in India to seize power ourselves. Only if we are ready to make this attempt can outside help, such as Subhas' National Army be of value to us and Tojo be prevented from annexing India. It is difficult to say how far Subhas himself is conscious of this aspect of India's national strategy.

This brings me to the question, what should we do when the war enters our doors. British policy has made the average Indian so anti-British that he is prepared if not to welcome the Japanese, at least to remain indifferent to the Anglo-Japanese conflict. This indifference will be our death. We must endeavour to remove it and in its place develop a positive policy of action. In the areas where war is waged or which the Japanese occupy or where they infiltrate, the foreigner's civil rule will weaken or come to an end. In these areas we must establish a Swaraj Government. In the name of this Government we must appeal to retreating units of the Indian Army to stay behind and become the people's army. From this day we must prepare to establish such a Government in the Eastern Province which in the course of time might embrace the entire nation. This preparatory work raises many questions

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which cannot be discussed here. It is sufficient to point out the broad policy and invite the attention of fighters to it as well as of the people generally.

(VI)

A word or two about the war before I conclude. The futile controversy about the character of the War still goes on merrily in the backwaters of Indian life. The fifth-columnists still insist—naturally enough—that it is a people's war. And those to whom controversy is the beginning and end of politics get terribly excited about it and argue with words and sometimes with blows. But the Indian people have no doubts about the nature of Britain's War and about those of their countrymen who support it. They do not require any longer to be told what fascism is or that this is their own War. British fascism has revealed itself to them in all its horrid brutality in the last year. Those who rot in prison, those who lost their dear ones in the countrywide murder by which the British re-established their "law and order", those whose homes were burnt and looted, whose women dishonoured, those who starve and die like rats on the streets—all these people know too well what sort of a people's war this is. A British general laid the decapitated heads of the Shahzadas of the House of Babar on a tray and sent them to the last Moghul Emperor, the father of the hapless princes as a gift from Queen Victoria. A century and a half later Tottenham boasted to American correspondents that he had bought enough sandalwood to burn the remains of Gandhi. India knows of these deeds and of other black deeds that fill the period from the beginning to the end (for the end is near) of British rule and she does not need to be told by traitors, masquerading as Marxists, what fascism is.

The war has entered its fifth year. The destruction of life and happiness that it has caused can never be repaired. The interests of the common man of both sides demand

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that the war end immediately. But it cannot be ended by Churchills and Roosevelts, Hitlers and Tojos. Even if they cried halt to the present butchery, it would only be to prepare new and more terrible weapons for more terrible butchery in the future. Allied plans for the post-war world, of which the barest glimpse has been vouchsafed to the common man, picture the same old world of privileged class and national tyranny, capitalist rivalry and chaos which brought two devastating wars in a generation and will surely bring a third.

The war can be truly ended by the common people of the world. But their voice is stifled. Russia which could have become the champion of the common man has herself suppressed him at home and disowned him abroad by truckling to the imperialists and super capitalists of Anglo-America. Labour throughout the world has become the camp-follower of the capitalist class and has thus sold its conscience and forfeited its leadership of society and of the new world.

In these circumstances India alone actively represents the aspirations and promptings of the disinherited and dispossessed of the Earth. India's fight for freedom is at once anti-imperialist (and therefore also anti-fascist, for imperialism is the parent of fascism) and a drive to end the war through the intervention of the common man. Neither allied nor axis victory is our aim, nor do we pin our hope on either. We work for the defeat both of imperialism and fascism by the common people of the world and by our struggle we show the way to the ending of wars and the liberation of the black, white and yellow.

(VII)

I have taken too much of your time and must conclude now. I have tried to show above that the only course open to us to follow with profit is to continue to fight. How should we fight?

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I have already pointed out that the present is a stage at which primarily determined fighters have to play their role.

The first thing these fighters must do is to maintain and strengthen and widen their organisation. Without organisation no army not even a non-violent one—can fight. Mass actions are generally spontaneous and the resultant of social forces, but there must be an organisation of a revolutionary elite to give shape and decision to them. The spontaneity of mass actions is also often the cumulative product of organised work among the masses by such an elite. In the recent history of our struggle there has been a marked indifference shown by leaders of the struggle to problems of organisation. The leaders, upon their arrest, have always left too much to the spontaneity of the people. No doubt, the relation of secrecy to non-violent action has been at the bottom of this indifference to organization. Non-violence does not permit secret functioning. Yet, during a struggle organization must be sacred. I do not pretend to have found a solution of this dilemma. All that I can say is that till the authentic technicians of non-violence discover a solution, it is essential in the interest of work for even those who strictly believe in non-violence to deliberately compromise with their principle to the extent of admitting secret organization. Even Mahatma Gandhi makes such compromises. By merely condemning secrecy and extolling open work we do not solve the difficulty, nor advance our cause.

Organization then is the first item in the programme of our struggle. It is the basic guarantee of a struggle. In regard to this item, I must emphasize the prime necessity of keeping alive, and in trim, the illegal Congress organizations. These organizations are the sole unifying principle of our struggle. It is true they have no constitutional basis, but it is only through them that the Congress can function today and reach the people and fight the enemy. In several provinces those organizations are not

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functioning properly. The cause of such organizational weakness is rarely the lack of workers. More often it is inadequate funds and the absence of capable organizers. Neither of these is irremediable. The Central Directorate of the I.N.C. has been trying to provide the provinces with at least their minimum requirements, and its attempts have not altogether been a failure. This is not the occasion nor the time to examine the role that India's wealthy have played in the present revolution. Here it is enough to comment upon the entire absence of perspective or vision in them. If they could see but a little way ahead they should easily realize that if the national movement were crushed, British capitalism, harassed as it would be by the post-war world, would give them no quarter whatever. Sheer self-interest, therefore, dictated that they should invest whole-heartedly in the National Revolution. But they have proved to be not only extremely selfish but also exceedingly small men.

However, the requirements for funds must be met somehow and all those who can help should. In some provinces, such as the United Province some of the ex-Ministers (Congress) are out of jail. If they, and other prominent Congressmen who have recently been released in various provinces do not do anything else, they should at least see that the financial requirements of their provinces are fulfilled. As far as the Central organization is concerned, financing of the provinces must remain its most important job. To send out programmes and instructions without the withdrawal to carry them into practice can be no more than perfunctory and unreal fulfilment of duty.

The absence of capable organizers and leaders, who can create work and take work out of others, is more difficult to remedy. However, a partial remedy is that those few who are left should tour around, meet the other workers and discuss with them their practical problems and give them such advice and training as may be possible. Where by fortuitous circumstance there happen to be more capa-

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ble men than necessary, some of them may be sent away to places where there are none or too few. New workers should be recruited, particularly from among students, and those who are being released from prison should be drawn back into the ranks.

With funds, recruitment and training, and wise use of available talent and experience, it should be possible to tackle our organizational problems.

To hold our organization together in the face of repression is a part of the fight—but only a part. Every unit of our organization must be in touch with the people. The link between the fighters and the people should not be allowed to snap. The link in one word is propaganda—spoken and written propaganda: leaflets, pamphlets, posters, radio broadcasts, mobile columns of fighters touring in the countryside, meeting and talking to the people. Distribution of literature is as important as its writing and production and equal care should be devoted to each task. Spheres of propaganda should also be carefully studied. Apart from sections of the public—students, labour, shopkeepers, peasants—we should see that our voice reaches the services, particularly the lower ranks of the Police and the Army. Foreign propaganda should also form a part of our job.

Propaganda is not only propaganda but also a form of our fight; for, to work a radio centre, to issue an “illegal” leaflet, to hold a meeting where no meetings are allowed, to say things which are “illegal”—all this is defiance of the usurper power—and a part of the fight against it.

What more can we do? I believe, and I do not mind saying so publicly, that unless there is a shift in the international situation—a Russo-German pact, a Sino-Japanese peace, a major reverse of British arms, war on Indian soil—we cannot do anything big. I want fighters to be under no delusion. Only those who fight on without hope of immediate results will win victory. Others will fall out of the ranks, will prattle wise words and pose as statesmen,

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but history will know them as deserters, as men of poor faith and poorer courage, who forsook duty in the face of suffering. Many friends are depressed by the thought that resistance on the scale that we can offer today—either in the form of Satyagraha and strike or as acts of dislocation—is ineffective. True. It is in the sense that its volume is not large enough to bring British rule to a standstill. But, it is effective in another, no less necessary, sense—it is effective propaganda, it keeps up the morale of the people, it keeps alive the hope of bigger action, it gives training to fighters, it keeps up the visible forms of the struggle and impresses upon the enemy that all his repression has been in vain. It is effective in the sense that it is a preparation for ultimate effective resistance. Therefore, we must continue to offer resistance to the British power in every shape or form possible, in accordance with whatever creed or programme we believe in.

I would call this our minimum programme for the present: organization, propaganda, overt resistance. In addition to this we have the whole wide field of preparation: our work among students and labour must continue, our contacts with the Army and the services must be maintained and developed, our preparations for dislocation must go on. A rising of the nature of that of the 9th of August, but on a bigger scale and better organized and directed, should be our goal. Our every effort should take us a step nearer that goal.

A word about the food situation. I need not say anything about its seriousness. That is well known and well understood. What is not well understood is that the only real solution of the food problem is a Swaraj government. The British partly by their incompetence and partly by design, have created this problem, and so long as they are here there is no alternative to starvation. Therefore, the fight for freedom is the real fight for food. But, to say this is not enough. We must also have a fight for food as a part of the fight for freedom. At the present moment the

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only public reaction to the food situation is charity. Charity has its own place in a class society, and much as I hate it as a socialist, I readily acknowledge the humanitarian motive of those who have hastened to rescue the starving from death. It is a commendable public effort. But charity is not enough. It will not solve the problem. Fighters have therefore the job—their most important job is the circumstances—to create feelings of resentment and anger in the needy and starving and to turn those feelings against the foreign power which is at bottom responsible for all this misery. Let the hungry create a situation in which normal British administration becomes impossible. Let us tell them—not only tell but help them to do it—to seize food where they can get it. In the rural areas we should prevent grains from being sent out and distribute stocks through village panchayats or similar agencies (taking care to keep away from Government or pro-Government bodies). Fighters, organised as guerillas, should seize grain from Government depots and similar places and distribute them among the needy. Forcible seizure by Government of crops should be resisted. In the cities and towns too the passivity and despair of the hungry and needy should be turned into resentment and anger and given concrete, active shape of demonstration and direct action. Fighters often ask me for a programme. Here is a vital programme which tackled with imagination and courage can convert the country into a seething cauldron in which the Empire can soon be boiled to death.

Speaking of organization, I have referred only to the Congress. Those, however, who wish to go beyond the creedal limitations of the Congress naturally require a separate organization to carry on their special activities. I have suggested a guerilla form of organization for this purpose, and some progress has already been made in developing a guerilla movement. In the very nature of things I cannot be expected to say more about this matter here except perhaps this that my views in this regard have

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no difficulty in reaching the proper quarters and those interested in this work cannot have much difficulty in putting themselves in touch with the organization that has been set up.

With these words, comrades, I close. I have analysed the present position without passion and laid my views before you without rhetoric or embellishment. It is for you to decide what is worthy of acceptance in them. You will ever find me at your command. "Do or die" remains my guiding star as it is yours. Let us therefore do or die.

Somewhere in India
1st September, 1943.

JAYA PRAKASH NARAYAN.

3

To American Officers and Soldiers in India

Friends,

I ADDRESS you as one who loves America only next to his own motherland. I spent the best part of my youth in your great country and seven of my happiest years. I went there as a student and learnt much not only from its universities but also from its factories and farms where I worked as an ordinary labourer in order to pay my way through college. Having studied at California, Iowa and Wisconsin, I finally graduated from Ohio. There may be men among you from these Universities. To such of you I sent my fraternal greetings.

I address you further as one who loves freedom and is prepared as you are, to lay down his life for it. And also as a socialist who believes that under socialism alone can war be banished from society and our freedom secured which your President had defined as major objectives of the peace that is to follow this war.

I address you also as a prisoner of war who has just exercised his right to escape from the enemy. I recently escaped from the Hazaribagh Central Prison, so that I may serve the cause of freedom more actively. The enemy—I mean the British Imperialist Government—has set up a reward for my arrest, as if I were a criminal run away from justice. Surely, every one of you, if a prisoner of war and given the chance, would run away from your enemy's camp; and your comrades and your countrymen would rightly look upon you as a hero. I am no hero, and yet I am not a criminal. I wish merely to work for the freedom of my people.

Too many men in the world are fighting and dying today for freedom. But I am afraid this word freedom has be-

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come too abstract—and devoid of substance, too undefined and vague. For me freedom is not an airy ideal to be talked about in radio broadcasts, but a concrete object. First of all and most of all, it means the freedom of my country—the freedom of our hundred millions of people from British Rule.

You are soldiers of freedom and you have been brought into close touch of my country. It is, therefore, essential that you understand and appreciate our fight for freedom.

You are all acquainted with Nazi lies. Dr. Goebbels has become synonymous with lying. But, perhaps, you are not acquainted with a far subtler and refined tradition of lying—imperialist lying, of which Churchill, Halifax, Amery & Co. are the brilliant present exponents. If you have bothered at all about India, you must have been told two tremendous lies. The first that Britain holds India down only to educate and train her in the arts of Self-Government, and will continue to do so only until such time as she is able properly to look after herself. The second that Britain is prepared to free India immediately if Indians united among themselves.

No greater lies were ever uttered in history. But these are not lies like those of Goebbels, nor do they come from the mouth of insolent Nazi rulers. Therefore, they do not grate upon your ears. They have the prestige of ages and tradition, they have the gloss of British culture, they are mouthed by noble lords and aristocrats of wealth. Poetry and literature, learning and science have sanctified them until we witness today the strange spectacle of even the most emancipated British minds failing to transcend their limits.

It is an insult to the intelligence of any but a moron to say that imperialisms are founded to train "backward" peoples in the arts of self-government; Empires, as you know, are founded to loot and to rob and to exploit. And the amount of British loot and exploitation in India would

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stagger even you who are accustomed to the astronomical figures of your national budgets.

Before Britain enslaved her, India was a free country. She did not have to learn the art of self-government from anybody. If at that moment the country was torn with wars, that was no more evidence of the unfitness of the people to govern themselves, than the much too frequent and far more bloody wars of Europe prove that the continent with its islands, is ready to be taught a lesson in self-government by, let us say, the United States of America. First to destroy the freedom of a nation and then to claim to train the enslaved in the art of freedom, is such a process of historic perversion that only the master of empire-building can venture to father it.

And how have the British been training us in the art of self-government? They have been here now for 150 years. In less than that period your great country, after it freed itself from a similar tutorship of the same power, has been able to transform itself from a disunited collection of backward colonies into the mightiest and the most advanced nation of the world. While you can see for yourself what the British tutors have done to us in a longer period of time. Not more than 10 per cent of the population is literate, not more than ten per cent of the economic resources of the country has been developed. Even during the three years of this total war you can see for yourselves what progress the country has made under British tutelage in production for war. This has been so scandalous that the Government of India did not even dare to publish the report of the American Technical Mission, which investigated under Dr. Grady, certain matters of industrial production. So anxious indeed have the British rulers been for our progress, that every little progress—political, economical, educational—has been made in the teeth of their opposition and after great agitation and often bitter struggle. The bitterest struggle of all, and the last, is on

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to win our total emancipation from the British stranglehold.

Much has been made of the Cripps Mission and the Cripps offer. But what did Cripps offer? A so-called status of freedom that we hemmed in by important limitations at the end of the war and nothing—absolutely nothing—at present and till the war lasts. India is not interested in promises. She wants immediate freedom. To this the imperialist propagandists answer, "We shall give you freedom if you but unite."

First of all what justification can a nation have for keeping another nation enslaved just because it is divided? If two brothers fight, is a robber justified in entering their home and taking possession of it? The British are in the position of the robber. Suppose Hindus and Muslims do fight, does that justify the British in marching into our home and occupying it? The plea that if one robber did not take possession of a divided house another would, is an argument that appeals to robber minds alone. No decent man would burgle an unguarded house on the plea that if he did not, another burglar might do so.

But the argument is not even true. The British are not prepared to hand over real power—unity or no unity—into Indian hands. During the Cripps negotiations it was clear without any doubt, that even if there were complete unity in India, as the British conceive it, the rule of the Viceroy-in-Council could not be replaced by that of a cabinet, responsible ultimately to the Indian people. Sir Stafford Cripps made it plain to the Congress that if a "National Government", were formed, the members of the government, would be free to resign if the Viceroy disagreed with policy. In another words, the measure of freedom the British Government was offering us—and the offer we are told still remains—was the freedom which the people's accredited representatives were to have to resign their office in case the Viceroy's will, representing the will of imperialism, conflicted with their own, representing the

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will of the Indian people! You can see what a tremendous lot of freedom that is.

The question of Indian unity has nothing to do with the subject. It has been raised merely to side-track the issue. The real issue is:—Is Britain prepared to liquidate her empire?" The answer of the Cripps mission was a clear no. The same answer was repeated by Mr. Churchill himself, when he recently announced that he had not assumed the office of the King's First Minister to preside over the liquidation of the Empire.

The test of Britain's preparedness to free India is what she is prepared to do in the present, and not in the liberality of her promises. It is easy to make promises and war is just the occasion when the ruling class of every nation is most liberal with them. You know what happened to the promises made during the last war. No better fortune awaits the promises of the present war. If after the war we have a better world to live in, it will not be the result of the promises of the present rulers of the world, but of the efforts you and I—the common men of the world—will make and are making.

I shall give you two further instances to show the enormity of British lies. For this let us turn from the Government of India to the Governments of the Provinces. Much has been said by the British statesmen of the fact that several Provinces of India are still being self-governed. But do you know what sort of self-government there is in these Provinces? The Premier of Sind, Mr. Allah Bux, was recently dismissed by the Governor of the Province. What was his offence? He renounced his title of "Khan Bahadur" and wrote a letter to the Viceroy in protest against the present policy of the British Government in India. That was sufficient ground for a Governor to dismiss the Prime Minister of a Province who enjoyed the confidence of his assembly and his people. In the great

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Province of Bengal, one of the ablest and most popular ministers, Mr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji, recently resigned his office in protest against the interference of the Governor with the administration of the Province and with the Policies of the Ministry. In a public statement, he described Provincial Autonomy as a complete farce.

Now, the British say that they only require unity in India to give her freedom. Well, there was unity in Bengal and Sind—all communities were joined in supporting the ministers. If there were Opposition Parties, they were only such as must exist in any democratic system. Why was the self-government not permitted in even these narrow sphere of Provincial administration? No more proof, I hope, is necessary to show that Britain is not prepared ever to surrender her Empire willingly.

Under these circumstances what are we to do? India as a whole is opposed to Nazism and Fascism. The Indian National Congress and the Indian Socialist movement, as represented by my party, "The All-India Congress Socialist Party," have declared it times without number, that they remain everlastingly opposed to these brutal systems. Before the beginning of the war and before many of the so-called democratic nations had decided to take a stand against Fascism, both Nationalist and Socialist India lined up with Republican Spain and Chiang's Republican China against Germany, Italy and Japan. Had India been free then, she would, no doubt, have played a great part in that international crisis, and it is possible that her intervention might have even prevented this world-war, or at least its spread to Asia. Free India and Free China would be a great guarantee against any aggression; and had these two ancient nations been free to work together, the history of our times might have been differently written.

But while we are consistent as total opponents of Fascism, we are also total opponents of Imperialism. We are

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not prepared to live any longer under its subjection, and we are determined to destroy it root and branch. At a time particularly when a world war is said to be fought to liberate oppressed peoples, we cannot but fight for our own liberation. We need offer no one any apology nor explanation as to why we long for freedom and why we fight to acquire it.

You may perhaps be troubled by the consideration that our fight with the British might weaken the United Nations' war against the Axis. If that is so, the responsibility is not only ours to consider the problem. It is for the United Nations also to give active thought to it. For our part, we do not wish to embarrass or create difficulties for the United Nations. But we cannot help if our war of liberation comes in the way. If it does, it is not our fault, but theirs. They claim to be fighting to restore freedom to humanity: why should the liberation of one-fifth of humanity come in their way? If the United Nations are truly fighting for the aims they profess, the Indian struggle for freedom should not hinder but help them. If it hinders them, it is only proof of the fact that the basis of their war is false; that there is dire discrepancy between their words and deeds, and ideals and practice. Our struggle would, therefore, render an incidental service to the United Nations by forcing them to bring their deeds to accord with their professions, thereby ensuring a juster Peace.

I, therefore, appeal to you as soldiers of freedom to support us in our struggle for freedom. You can support us in three ways. First, by refusing to take any part in Britain's fascist war against us. Perhaps your Government itself has issued instructions to this effect. Secondly, by letting your countrymen, your leaders and your government know the real truth about India. You are in our midst and are in a position to tell folks on other side, the true state of affairs here. By enlisting the support of your

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country in our favour, you would further the great objective for which you are prepared to sacrifice your lives. Third, by speaking to the British soldiers and officers and explaining to them the reality about India. The British soldier is a brave honest man, and if facts are placed before him, he would not fail to realise the justice of our cause. At present he is filled with intense prejudice and race-hatred and with ignorance about India. As such he harms himself and his cause as much as he harms us. Most of the British soldiers are common working people, and as such themselves the victims of their imperialist exploiters. It is essential for them to realise that our cause is their cause too, for unless the Empire is broken and destroyed, the British people themselves would not be freed from exploitation and poverty. In England there is much talk about a new social order after the War; and our soldier has faith in that future, but no new order can be built upon the old foundations of empire.

Therefore, tell the Britishmen that if they are fighting for a better world, where wealth and opportunity, power and prestige, education and culture, and the good things of life shall be more rationally and equitably distributed, they are going about it the wrong way, if they shot innocent women and children, burn and loot houses and try to crush in other fascist ways, the greatest fight for freedom that ever stirred this old Asiatic continent. Tell them that we do not wish to fight them or harm them, nor do we wish any evil to the British people. We merely wish to fight the empire and destroy it, because it is the enemy of our freedom and happiness and prosperity. Tell them also that after we are free we shall march shoulder to shoulder with them in an assault on all kinds of oppression and brutality—Nazi, imperialist, capitalist. Only then we would build a New World Order. Tell them finally to open out their minds and to think for themselves. If they continue blindly and meekly to gulp down any propa-

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ganda that their rulers feed them with, they would have fought and died in vain, for their children would inherit the same vicious world of tyranny and inequality, poverty and misery, wars and armaments.

This, friends, is in brief my appeal. I hope it will find its way to your hearts.

Long Live the Cause of Freedom!

Long Live Indian Revolution!

Somewhere in India

JAYA PRAKASH NARAYAN.

II

WHY SOCIALISM ?

- **SOCIALISM : A SYSTEM OF SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION**
- **INEQUALITY : THE CENTRAL PROBLEM OF SOCIETY**
- **PRODUCTION AND ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH**
- **THE SOCIALIST SOLUTION**

WHY SOCIALISM?

SOCIALISM: A SYSTEM OF SOCIAL ORGANISATION

THE first thing to remember about Socialism is that it is a system of social reconstruction. It is not a code of personal conduct; it is not something which you and I can practise. Nor is it a hot-house growth. When we speak of applying Socialism to India, we mean the reorganisation of the whole economic and social life of the country; its farms, factories, schools, theatres. No doubt, it is possible to run the life of a single village or the business of a single factory on socialist lines. But, that would not be Socialism. The picture cast by a prism on the laboratory wall has seven colours, but it is not the rainbow of the skies.

It follows, therefore, that those who desire to construct a socialist society should have the power and the requisite sanction behind them to do so. No group of idealists can build up Socialism unless it has power in its hands.

What is meant by power? If one looks at the world of today, one finds that the instrument through which groups, parties, individuals attempt to enforce their plans, their schemes, over the Community, the Nation, is the *State*. When the State is in your hands, you can legislate, you can use the whole magnificent apparatus of propaganda and education that modern science has made available; you can enforce your will. And, if there is resistance you can use the coercive arm of the State—the police and the army—to crush it. Behind every piece of legislation lies the State's power to persuade and, ultimately, to coerce.

No party in the world of today can build up Socialism unless it has the machinery of the State in its hands;

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whether it has come to acquire it through the will of the electorate or by a *coup d'etat* is irrelevant to our discussion just now.

As a corollary to this, we can state another proposition: A party in power, i.e., in possession of the State, may reasonably hope to establish Socialism, provided it has either of two things: sufficient power of coercion to put down resistance or sufficient popular support to be able to deal with opposition. Both in the end mean the same thing. The coercive powers of a Socialist State, if they exist at all, are bound to be derived from popular support—the “unpopular” support, that is, the support of the classes of property, being rather thrown on the opposite side.

I have said that a party in possession of the State and with the means to keep itself there, can, if it so desired, create a socialist heaven on the earth. What must it exactly do to begin doing this? Must it haul up all the “exploiters” and pot-bellied capitalists and have them shot? Must Pandit Jawaharlal, supposing he became the Premier or President of Socialist India, line up Taluqdars of the U.P. and have them blown up to bits? Must he seize the treasures of the *rajahs* and the *mahajans* and distribute them to the people—equally, of course? Must he turn over the Tata Iron Works, for instance, to the workers employed there, and leave them to make as good or bad a business of it as they please? Must he split up all the land in the country, divide the total acreage by the total population, and hand over a little plot to each individual? Will that be Socialism?

No. Socialism is something more sensible, more scientific, more civilized than all that.

What, then, must Pandit Jawaharlal do?

We can find the answer to this question, if we take a look at the society we live in—here and abroad.

WHY SOCIALISM?

INEQUALITY: THE CENTRAL PROBLEM OF SOCIETY

The first thing that strikes us is the strange and painful fact of inequalities—inequality of rank, of culture, of opportunity; a most disconcertingly unequal distribution of the good things of life. Poverty, hunger, filth, disease, ignorance—for the overwhelming many. Comfort, luxury, culture, position, power—for the select few. In our country as much as anywhere else; perhaps more here than elsewhere. Where, indeed, will you find such contrasts of wealth and poverty, of despotism and degradation as in unhappy India?

This fact of inequalities, with all its brood of social consequences, is the central problem of our society. It is to the solution of this problem that have been directed the best efforts of the best men in all ages, in our age more than in any other. Charity, philanthropy, utopias, appeals to the more fortunate to be kind to the less fortunate, denunciation of the rich and exaltation of poverty, curtailment of wants—these have been the common reactions to this evil of inequalities.

The socialists's reaction is very different from these. His approach to this problem is like that of the physician to disease. He does not take the fact of inequalities for granted and then proceed to level them up. He endeavours rather to tackle the problem at the source so as to check the very growth of inequalities.

BIOLOGICAL INEQUALITY

In tracing the source of this evil, the socialist first of all encounters the biologist. He is told that human beings are not born equal, as the democrat loves to repeat, but very much unequal. From birth we are said to differ in innate capacity—both in quantity and quality. This of course is true and undeniable. Even a behaviourist will have no difficulty in admitting the biologist's claim.

But let us see how this fact of biological inequalities affects the socialist's examination of social inequalities:

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He admits that the normal bell-shaped curve of probabilities applies as much to human abilities as to any other phenomenon. In society there is at one end a small group of geniuses and at the other an equally small group of half-wits and idiots, while in the centre is the vast majority of humanity with more or less equal capabilities.

These biological differences appear in numerous social forms. We get, for example, inequalities in learning and achievements in the arts and sciences. Then, we have inequalities of rank, of wealth, and power, of opportunity. Now, the socialist's protest never was against the fact that Tagores and Ramans exist in society. If anything, he is glad that they do exist. He regrets, however, that hundreds of potential Tagores and Ramans go unknown to the grave owing to the fact that they are denied opportunities for self-development. The evil of inequalities was never said to lie, either by socialists or others, in the fact that only a few are gifted by Nature to become great poets and scientists. The socialists' plea is that the evil lies in the inequalities of the second set enumerated above, viz., inequalities of rank, wealth, etc. In our modern world, where property has become a universal social sanction, it is the unequal distribution of property that is the core of the social problem.

INEQUALITY OF WEALTH NOT DUE TO BIOLOGICAL INEQUALITY

Wherefore then, this unequal distribution of wealth? It may be suggested that here too biology does the trick. The clever ones among us make better businessmen and therefore grow richer than the others. Supposing we grant this for the moment; does it explain the wealth of those came to acquire it by inheritance? In the case of inherited wealth, it is obvious, of course, that biological qualities play no part at all. The idiotic heir of a millionaire would just as well inherit the millions of his ancestors as he would if he were a genius. Here it is obvious that it is merely

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the existence of a social standard, custom, that is responsible for the fortunes of heirs. Change that custom, and millions of people who are wealthy today would suddenly grow poor.

But let us take the case of those who have made their own fortunes. Have they not done so because of their superior ability?

That to be a successful businessman a certain type and degree of ability is required, cannot be denied. But, would it not be rather strange that divine dispensation should have ordained that only one type of human ability should be productive of wealth, while all others should acquire wealth only at the will of the wealthy? A great mathematician may be the greatest of his time but his researches, while they bring him immortality perhaps, do not in themselves mean wealth for him. Has not his genius even as much value as that of an ordinary businessman who makes money by following certain set rules of the game? A scientist, no matter how clever, does not make any money from his laboratory, unless, of course, he turns a businessman. The businessman's laboratory alone seems to be productive of wealth.

Let us see what this laboratory is and how wealth is created and accumulated.

PRODUCTION AND ACCUMULATION OF WEALTH

In the world we have men on one side and Nature on the other. All wealth is in the womb of Nature. Man must work upon Nature in order to appropriate from it what he wants. All things of use which he does appropriate constitute his wealth. Thus, the source of wealth is Nature and the agency which creates it, is human labour. This is the rock bottom of all economics.

How does wealth accumulate? It is obvious that if men appropriate from Nature just as much as was required for their bare existence, nothing would be left for accumulation. The amount of wealth that man can extract from

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Nature depends upon his productive power, i.e., the nature of his tools and his methods of work. *For accumulation to be physically possible, therefore, the productive powers of man should be so advanced that he may be able to produce more than he needs for his subsistence.* This is the fundamental basis of accumulation. When the arts of hunting, fishing, planting have advanced enough to yield more than is necessary for the lowest existence, accumulation becomes possible.

Now, in a society in which the arts of production have advanced beyond the subsistence level, each member would be able to accumulate a certain amount of wealth, *provided* he was free to work for himself, owned his own tools, had free access to Nature and was able to keep all he produced for himself. The maximum rate of accumulation would depend upon the difference between maximum individual production and minimum individual consumption. It might very well happen that some families instead of consuming the minimum used up all they produced. These will not be able to accumulate anything. They, however, will not starve, because we have assumed that the stage of production has not only reached but passed the subsistence level.

In this society there may also be some others who are exceptionally intelligent. They may naturally produce a little more than the rest and, if they are thrifty too, they might save comparatively more. On the other hand, people of inferior intelligence might save very little or nothing at all. But, in every case, in such a society, every able-bodied person would be able to accumulate wealth or, at least, support himself, if, to repeat the provisos stated above, he is free to work for himself, owns his tools, has free access to Nature and is the master of all that he produces.

Let us turn from this hypothetical society to our own. We find that the methods of production—both agricultural and industrial—are so advanced that a man can easily

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produce much more than he can consume, even at the present standard of living, which is naturally higher than the primitive stage of our hypothetical society. The Indian cultivator, in spite of his comparatively old-fashioned methods and tools, can produce much more than is necessary for him to live on. Yet we find that millions of our people do not get even a square meal a day. At the same time we also find that there are many people who have not only got their wants satisfied, but who are also enjoying a high degree of comfort. How have these conditions of dire want on one side and ease and luxury on the other been created?

Let us take the case of the poor first. Considering the advanced productive powers of our present society, it should have been possible for every Indian not only to support himself but also to accumulate something. But, as a matter of fact, most Indians are not supporting themselves. Why? Because, the provisos which were mentioned above have nearly all disappeared. *The people do not all work for themselves; they have no longer free access to Nature: in many cases they are not the masters of their tools they are not able to keep all they produce for themselves.* How all this has come about would be too long a story to tell. That the fact is true, all of us can see.

The poverty of our people, then, is due to the fact that the means of production, i.e., tools, materials, land, etc., are no longer in their hands. They have to pay for most of them, and the more they pay for them the lesser their own shares of the produce and the greater their poverty. A larger proportion of them has not even the means to pay for them; there is nothing that they can do except to sell their labour to others. If the means of production were freely available to each individual, there would be no poverty, unless the population rose to such an extent that at the present stage of the productive powers of means of production were unable to produce sufficient wealth to

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meet the needs of the people. This certainly is not the case in India yet, in spite of its large population.

Now, let us take the case of the rich. How is it that some have come to acquire thousands and lakhs of times as much wealth as the poor? An individual, no matter how clever, cannot possibly produce, at any stage of productivity, thousands of times more than others who are using the same means of production. The great riches of the rich are not obviously of their own production. It is impossible for such disproportion in the productivity of men, living in the same society, to exist. We have pointed out above that there is no other way of creating wealth except by working upon Nature, and that the only way of accumulating wealth is by producing more than one consumes. The limits to production are set by the stage of development the arts of production have reached in society. This is true even in the complicated societies of the West, where production is so mechanized. There we find, as we do here too, though not to the same extent, that the means of production, particularly of industrial production, have developed so much that they cannot be used any more by individuals working independently. But, this in no way invalidates my argument. If all the people participating in production took their share of what they produced, the situation would still be the same as in our hypothetical society. Each member of society would accumulate a fair amount of wealth and there would be no poverty nor concentration of too much wealth in a few hands.

How then, have the great fortunes of present society been made? It may be urged that they are the result of patient saving by industrious people. The answer is that thrift and industry have not been known to travel for generations in the same family line, nor in themselves have they been found to result in excessive wealth. None of the fortunes of today, especially those founded on industry, has a hoary ancestry. The secret of wealth does not lie in the peculiar talents or blood of the wealthy.

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WEALTH AND EXPLOITATION

Our analysis of the process of accumulation furnishes the secret. Suppose that in a society in which production has passed the subsistence level, an individual manages to employ, say, ten other individuals to work for him and pays them only what they require for their subsistence and keeps the surplus for himself. That individual would be accumulating wealth ten times as fast as others who are working for themselves; and he would soon become a very wealthy man. It should be obvious that the volume of his private wealth would increase with the number of individuals he employs.

Suppose again that in the same society another individual came somehow to establish a monopoly over Nature, say, land. By virtue of that monopoly he does not allow anyone to work upon that land, i.e., to cultivate it, unless a share of the produce is vouchsafed him. He too will begin to grow richer than the rest, and his riches will grow in proportion to the land he "owns" and the tribute he exacts from those who till his land. Likewise with other natural resources.

This is the true secret of the inequality of wealth and the true meaning of *exploitation*.

The question may be asked here, why should any individual work for any one else and be thus cheated out of part of his produce when he could easily work for himself and keep the whole of it to himself? A full treatment of this question will involve a survey of the entire social and political history of mankind. Briefly, the answer is that there is no reason why any one should do it and that, as a matter of fact, in history no one has done it except under compulsion.

In all human societies where the open frontier existed so that any one could clear the jungle and cultivate his own plot, no one worked for another except for mutual benefit. The gifts of Nature, however, were the first to become the monopoly of the few. This monopoly in the

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earliest days was based on sheer and naked force. A group of people arose practically everywhere who established an exclusive ownership over Nature, particularly over land, and subjugated others to slavery, serfdom, or to the status of just "free" rent-payers.

In industry, as long as the latter remained at a level where independent individual production was possible, industrial exploitation and, therefore, differences in industrial incomes, were slow to arise. As, however, production advanced and cities grew, slaves or even individual craftsmen were made to work together for a master, thus creating inequalities in industrial incomes also. The real and rapid growth of industrial fortunes dates, however, from the time steam power, (the Industrial Revolution) came into being, making possible a much larger employment, i.e., *exploitation*, of workers.

It may be urged that there are in society classes of men who neither employ labour nor receive rent or any other tribute, but who nevertheless are quite rich—richer in some cases than the men of the other two classes. For instance, there are traders, speculators, bankers, etc. These neither produce wealth themselves nor do they directly exploit the labour of others engaged in producing wealth. Whatever may be the immediate source of the wealth of these classes, this much at least should be clear that it too must come somehow from the total wealth created in the Community.

Wealth, as we showed, is created by labour and except that portion of it which goes to the producers, it becomes the property of the employing and exploiting classes. But these classes naturally cannot use themselves all the things that their workers have created. These must be sold and other things bought. Thus, traders and speculators come into being and because goods must be sold in order to enable the manufacturers to buy materials for further manufacture and sale, the latter yield, both as buyers and sellers, some part of the surplus wealth that has fallen

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into their hands to the traders and speculators. Likewise with bankers. They are said to earn interest on the money they lend. But the interest is created in the process of manufacture and is paid out of the same fund of surplus wealth. Profits, interests, middlemen's commissions,—all these come from the same common fund; the fund created by the surplus wealth appropriated by manufacturers and those who possess a monopoly in the means of production. Money in itself cannot make money, nor can any sort of financial and commercial manipulation do so. The whole game of capitalist business consists in the attempt of the various parts of it to appropriate as large a share of the surplus wealth as possible. Herein lies the secret of all capitalist competition and all the subtle and complicated business practices that are so laboriously taught in the universities.

To repeat, for it will bear repetition, it is the wealth that accumulates in the hands of those who own the means of production, by virtue of their exploitation of others' labour, that constitutes the general fund from which, as a result of the working of the economic organisation, other groups draw their share. It is wrong to believe that these "middlemen" in any manner "create" wealth. Their "money-making" merely means diverting as great a share of the total accumulated wealth as possible in their own direction. Even the professors, lawyers, physicians, etc., fill their ladles from this same common bowl, though in their case, part of their share comes from that portion of the total wealth also that goes to the actual producers—the workers, peasants, etc.

To sum up. The root cause of inequalities of wealth lies in the fact that the gifts of Nature, which yield wealth to men, and the instruments of production, have come to be privately owned by people for their own benefit. This leads to economic exploitation, i.e., the withholding from the workers of all that they produce except what they need to live on at a given standard of living. This takes place

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either directly, as when labourers are employed to produce goods for the manufacturer, or indirectly, as when men rent land, or any other natural resource, for their livelihood.

The earliest manner in which these sources and instruments (collectively termed "means" in socialist writings) of production passed into private hands was through force. This is termed "primitive accumulation". The surplus wealth thus accumulated in the hands of those who were able to use force went on multiplying through the ages through the institution of slavery and indentured labour, till the loot from India and the inventions of certain German-Englishmen combined to usher in the Industrial Revolution. This became *par excellence* the age of exploitation, because it made the employment of unheard of masses of labourers in single manufactures possible.

Such being the causes of the present inequalities of wealth, it should not be difficult to imagine what form the socialist solution of this problem would take.

THE CURE OF INEQUALITIES

Theoretically speaking, two solutions are possible, each if practicable resulting in a just, equitable and happy society. The first solution is so to reconstitute society that every individual may be free to work for himself—he may either cultivate his own land (without the payment of any tribute to anyone) or work with his own tools in his workshop. No one may be allowed to possess larger means of production than he can possibly make use of with his own hands.

It should be clear that in order to change the existing order into the one described above, very drastic changes will have to be imposed. For such a society to work smoothly, a degree of social control and discipline would be required which one does not associate with societies whose economic organisation is so primitive. Such a society, moreover, cannot have railways and telegrams—

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in fact, nothing but the most primitive forms of transport and communication. From a military standpoint such a society, exposed to the rapacity of highly industrialized countries, would be extremely weak and an easy prey to them. From the point of view of standard of living, the people, especially in India where there is such a large population, would have to live on an extremely low level, for *per capita* productivity would be very low.

In short, even if it were possible to adopt this solution as an escape from our present ills, it would be extremely inadvisable to do so for innumerable reasons.

It is not, however, possible to adopt this solution. Nothing short of a dictatorship would be required to carry it through. Such drastic transformation of society, involving the destruction of all vested interests, would not be otherwise possible. For such a dictatorship of the small producer there is no social basis in society.

THE SOCIALIST SOLUTION

The socialist solution, as it ought to be clear from our analysis of the process of accumulation of wealth, is to *abolish private ownership of the means of production* and to *establish over them the ownership of the whole community*.

The abolition of private and establishment of social ownership over the means of production mean the eradication of economic exploitation, the ending of economic inequalities; in other words, the removal of the basic curse of present society. The source of accumulation of wealth in private hands is the exploitation of labour, as we saw above. With social ownership established, people no longer work for others. They work for themselves, not individually but collectively; and what they produce is not for the profit of the manufacturer, but for their own consumption. Social ownership means that all wealth is held in common and shared equitably, the basis of distribution being, initially, the amount and character of work done and, finally,

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the needs of the individual: only that part of the produce being withheld from distribution which is necessary for defence and administration, for schools and hospitals, for economic development, and for other common purposes.

Here, then, is the basic principle of Socialism—socialization of the means of production. Any attempt at socialist reconstruction of society must start with the abolition of the private ownership of the means of production.

For a young State launching upon Socialism, it may not be possible to accomplish this at one stroke. However, if it is to succeed in its purpose, it must effect this change immediately in all those spheres of large-scale production which dominate the economic life of the country and hold the key position.

In developed communities, side by side with the means of production, rise also means of exchange and distribution—banks, commercial institutions, transport, etc. The latter issue out of and support the former. Their purpose is to keep the wheels of production turning. Socialization of the former therefore must also be accompanied by socialization of the latter.

We are now perhaps in a position to say what Pandit Jawaharlal would do, if he came to power.

III

SOCIALISM AND INDIA

- 1 SOCIALISM AND THE INDIAN BACKGROUND
- 2 IS SOCIALISM OPPOSED TO INDIAN CULTURE ?
- 3 THE PROBLEM OF THE VILLAGE
- 4 CO-OPERATIVE AND COLLECTIVE FARMING FOR INDIA

SOCIALISM AND INDIA

I

Socialism and the Indian Background

WE have been accused of attempting to import a foreign system into India, which has its own peculiar problems and solutions thereof.

I wish to make it clear that we have no desire to disregard either the peculiar problems of India or its historical-cultural background. It would indeed be utterly un-Marxian to do so. We have, in fact, examined to the best of our ability the so-called "Indian" solutions; and we are satisfied that *under present conditions* they cannot take the place of Socialism. This is no reflection on the genius of the social philosophers of ancient India. Unfortunately for them Indian Society has changed so drastically, its problems have been transformed so radically, that their ideas hardly bear any relation to present facts. There are certain broad principles which hold good in all ages and climes. But broad principles are of little value when concrete means are sought for the removal of concrete evils. And it is here—not in their conception of general, social and individual good—that the old systems and the new reflections break down completely.

The old principles were laid down when civilization was much simpler than at present. Neither industry nor agriculture had developed far enough to make it possible for men to exploit the labour of others to any considerable extent. All production was on a small individual scale. Population was low and Nature kind and bountiful. It was possible for any able-bodied man to clear the jungle and settle down with his family on the reclaimed land.

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From this it is a far cry to our present agrarian and industrial problems. Landlordism is an un-Indian institution, mills and factories are also new to the country. New likewise are all the problems that have been created by the imperialist domination. The basic economic problem of our society—the problem of exploitation of the many by the few—which arises, from the monopoly of land and other instruments of production—did not exist in its present universal form at the time of *Manu*.

SOCIALISM NOT BOUND BY NATIONAL FRONTIERS

This problem, which we find has no relation with India's ancient past, has, on the other hand, a basic unity with the problems of the modern world. In China, Japan, England, France, Germany, the United States of America cast majority of the people has to face essentially the same problem. The development of the powers of production, in other words, the invention of steam and electrical power, has given birth to, and reared, the most extensive, and thorough system of human exploitation ever known—the system of capitalist production and distribution.

Socialism, which is an inevitable reaction to this system, is, therefore, not bound by national frontiers. Its home is as much in England as in Japan, as much in Germany as in China, in the United States of America as in India. Wherever conditions of capitalist exploitation exist, Socialism too will spread to the four corners of the globe. India can be, and, events are showing, is no exception.

The existence of feudalistic relics in India modifies its problems to some extent, but it does not change its essential nature. The balance of power between the various sections of the exploited masses would be somewhat different here, and their transition to Socialism slower—otherwise their *goal* as well as their initial task of overthrowing the system of capitalist-cum-feudal exploitation

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and rule, would remain essentially the same as in the developed capitalist countries.

INDIAN RECIPES

It is for those who accuse us of imitating the West, to produce a truly "Indian" solution of the problems that face us. But though there has been a good deal of talk about India's peculiarities and its unique recipes for its ills, no one seems to have taken the trouble of formulating them in intelligible language—with perhaps only one honourable exception.

As far as I am aware, Dr. Bhagwan Das is the only one among the leaders of the country, who has given serious thought to this problem, and laid before the public what he considers are Indian solutions of Indian problems. To us what is of greater value and importance than the solutions that the learned Doctor advocates, is his bold insistence on the view that the nature of Swaraj is a subject of paramount importance and calls for urgent and earnest inquiry and discussion. But apart from the socialists, the Doctor stands almost alone in holding this view.

As far as most other lovers of Indian culture are concerned, their task is finished after they have tarred us with the brush of "Foreignism" and prated some nonsense about the folly of troubling about matters that concern the remote future. "Let us win Swaraj first" they say. One wonders if they see the inconsistency of their position when they attack and oppose Socialism. By that action they make it clear that whatever "ism" they might accept after they have won Swaraj, they would, at least, be opposed to Socialism. Apart from being a breach of the neutrality they assume, this gives a clear indication of their sympathies.

Before proceeding to consider some of the alternatives, I should like to point out the curious fact that these Indian culture enthusiasts, when they are faced with Socialism, fail to show at the least interest in the *Manu*-ite solution

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presented to them by Dr. Bhagwan Das. The fate of the Das-Das Swaraj Scheme is well-known. And now his *Ancient vs. Modern Scientific Socialism* has fallen again, it seems, on deaf ears.

To take a concrete instance. It will be recalled that at the time of the last Assembly elections, of 1934 the learned Doctor had pointed out that according to Indian traditions it was for the people to seek out their leader and ask him to legislate for them and not for "candidates" for leadership to go running about begging the people for their "votes". At that time it was not noticed that the lovers of Indian tradition welcomed Dr. Das' suggestion with any visible enthusiasm. I suspect, on the other hand, that he was looked upon by most of these gentlemen as a mere *Manu*-crank.

The greater part of this talk of "Indianism" is, to my mind a mere cloak for reaction to conservatism. If the leaders of the country (with one or two exceptions) seat down today to forge out a Constitution for India, I have not the least doubt that, in spite of all this condemnation of Socialism as un-Indian, that Constitution would be an utter imitation of the democratic constitutions of the West.

2

Is Socialism Opposed to Indian Culture?

IT is often said that India's conditions are peculiar; that India's traditions are different; that India is industrially a backward country; and that, therefore, Socialism has no applicability here.

If by this it is meant that the basic principles of Socialism have no validity in India, it would be difficult to imagine a greater fallacy.

The laws by which wealth accumulates hold as true in India as elsewhere and the manner in which the accumulation can be stopped is the same here as anywhere else. The peculiarity of Indian conditions may influence and determine the manner and the stages in which the principles of Socialism may be applied here, but never alter those principles. If social ownership of the means of production is essential for stopping exploitation and unequal distribution of wealth in other parts of the world, it is equally essential in India.

As for Indian traditions, as far as I know them, they are not averse to the sharing of life and its privileges. It is said that individualism has always been the dominant feature of Indian civilization and therefore the latter is opposed to Socialism. To put the problem in this manner is not to understand either of the ideals and to get lost in words. Individualism has been the prominent *motif* in our culture only in the sense that perfection of the individual has been its ideal; never in the sense of narrow, self-seeking individualism, which is the *motif* of capitalist society. And, if individual perfection is the goal, the socialist has not the least difficulty in showing that such perfection can come about only by aiming at the utmost common good. Does not Trotsky say somewhere that only in

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a socialist society can the average of humanity rise to the level of a Plato or a Marx?

Finally, India's industrial backwardness need not discourage us. If anything, this backwardness would be helpful to us because it means a much weaker opposition. As for the practicability of applying Socialism to a region of industrial backwardness, it is enough to remind the reader of what the Russians are doing in some of the most backward parts of the globe.

It is for these reasons that the Party has set for itself the object of establishing a socialist society in India after independence has been won.

3

The Problem of the Village

AMONG Congressmen there is a large section which is devoutly attached to the village and all it stands for. This section, owing to a misunderstanding, feels called upon to take the offensive against the socialists who, it is known, stand for machinery; and therefore, so it is thought, for the exploitation of the village, for the disruption of its beautiful self-sufficient economy (which is non-existent now) and for the growth of parasitic cities.

Let me first of all freely admit all that these friends have to say, against the modern cities. These monsters of human habitation—their crowding, their nerve-racking traffic, their insanitation, their ugliness, their slums—rightly make us revolt against them and compel us to look upon them as a menace, as a danger, as enemies of good and sensible living. The city for most of its dwellers is a terrible place of habitation. It has its theatres and resorts of amusements; but these are more like anodynes for tired nerves and fatigued bodies than things of joy and beauty, from which the soul may draw sustenance, or, if you prefer a modern phrase, which may develop and recreate men's personality.

Further, the modern cities have grown on the exploitation of the people,—not however, of the village people alone, but also of the city workers. The conditions of this exploitation bring about an unnatural hostility between city and village, in which the latter invariably gets the worse deal. While art, knowledge, luxury, comfort, are concentrated in the cities, the villages remain neglected, undeveloped—terrible contrasts to the cities which they help to create.

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While all this is true, it is wrong to imagine that under Socialism this abnormal growth of the social body would be retained or encouraged. Socialism, if anything, is a technic of social engineering which has as its aim the harmonious and well-balanced growth of the whole of society. Neither the socialist village, nor the socialist city, will bear any resemblance to its present prototype. The contrasts, the inner conflicts, would not only not be perpetuated but systematically fought and eradicated.

It is true that the socialist hugs machinery. But to him machinery is not an instrument of exploitation, not stakes and stocks to which to tie the human body and torture it. Machines to us mean friends of labour—things that relieve human toil; increase its productivity; conquer the wind and the sea for us.

The assumption that machinery will inevitably create monstrosities of cities and rural unemployment by disrupting village economy, is wrong. Machines if used for private benefit by a handful of people who own them, will undoubtedly produce these and worse results. But that society as a whole making use of these efficient and powerful instruments of production for the good of the entire population, will also encounter these same results; is too absurd a proposition to be accepted.

Under Socialism the cities will be planned and concentration avoided, because industry will be diffused. There will be geographical planning as well as statistical. On the other hand the villages will be transformed from little cluster of houses—cut off from the world, tucked away into the recesses of the Earth—to progressive communities, connected with the rest of the world with electric railways, telephones, radios, roads, buses. The village too will become an industrial unit of production like the city. It will have its self-government, its schools, its recreation, its museum.

4

Co-operative and Collective Farming for India

[The problem of encouragement and promotion of Co-operative and Collective Farming by the State in India is all-important. Jayaprakash's views are set forth here. Side by side he cautions us about the next step—peasant proprietorship.—Editor.]

["Common ownership being our goal, it would appear rather strange that we should think of redistributing land to peasants. This necessity arises from the fact that common ownership and cultivation of land would be slow to develop and therefore we will have to begin with peasant proprietorship."]

"At present there is grave inequality in the size of holdings. While some holdings are of hundreds of acres, others do not even approach an acre. We, therefore, propose to redistribute the land so as to remove these grave inequalities."—Jayaprakash.]

WITH this item we approach one of the most difficult and baffling problems that would face any socialist government, much more so the Indian socialist government. Let us carefully consider the matter.

India is a predominantly agricultural country. It is argued, therefore, that it can have little to do with Socialism. We have already shown above that under present world conditions and with the productive resources of society developed as they are today, it is possible to build up Socialism anywhere, no matter how backward the place may be. If there is a party in power in India, desirous of establishing Socialism in the country, the fact of its being predominantly agricultural will not be an impediment. It will lower the pace of socialist reconstruction, but nothing beyond that.

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The real question is not the possibility of establishing Socialism; but, whether Indian agriculture, the Indian peasant, the Indian nation will gain by Socialism. And to this question our answer is emphatic. There is not the least doubt in our minds that Socialism alone can save Indian agriculture from ruin and bankruptcy; can alone make the nation strong and powerful.

The malady of Indian agriculture has gone so far that nothing but a drastic transformation can save it. Briefly, it suffers from the following diseases: vested interests in land which not only exploit the actual tiller of the soil but also make him an indifferent and inefficient cultivator; disproportionately high taxation; an unbearable burden of debt that is fast approaching the breaking point; subdivision of land into utterly uneconomic holdings; low productivity; unsatisfactory methods of marketing; bad credit facilities; lack of balance between industry and agriculture; town and village.

Any one of these is a big enough problem to be tackled, but when all of them have to be faced, as they must be, in order to realise a synthetic and comprehensive solution, no possible measure of reform can cope with the situation.

The only solution is to clear away all the vested interests that lead in any manner whatever to the exploitation of the tiller of the soil; liquidate all agrarian debts; pool the holdings and establish co-operative and collective farming, State and co-operative credit and marketing system and co-operative subsidiary industries.

It should not be supposed that these are "destructive" ideas. They mean the destruction of nothing but that system of exploitation which is inherent in the relationship of tenant and landlord. For the rest, they are wholly constructive, requiring nothing except State guidance, encouragement and propaganda.

Professor Radhakamal Mukherji, in his Agra Extension Lecture, is reported to have admitted that no improvement was possible in Indian agriculture "unless the Indian

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village was converted from a collection of small isolated holdings to a single co-operative farm, and agriculture was treated as a collective service." An admission which fully bears out our plea.

Those who get frightened at the mere idea of co-operative and collective enterprise, particularly when applied to the field of agriculture, might suggest that a better alternative would be to create solvent and efficient peasant proprietors, each with an indivisible economic holding, and cultivating his land independently.

Our answer is that, if this is actually done, it too will involve changes no less drastic than those required by us, and that at the same time the result will be infinitely inferior—from the point of view of both the peasants and the nation.

From the peasant's point of view, because an independent peasant runs greater risks and is at a greater disadvantage as producer, seller, buyer and borrower than the peasant who is a member of a co-operative farm. At the same time, he gets none of the facilities and amenities that a large co-operative enterprise must offer its members. Culturally and ethically he is bound to be a much less developed individual, speaking in terms of averages, that one who has shed his narrow individualism and identified himself with the Community.

Considered from the nation's point of view, our case is stronger still. And it should be remembered that the peasant too is a part—the greater part in India—of the nation.

While speaking of the necessity of Socialism in India, I pointed out above that we required Socialism here, as elsewhere, because life here has been so completely disorganised as a result of imperialistic exploitation.

But with individualistic agriculture, no planning would be possible. Consider the prospect of planning production and distribution in a country where the raw material and the food-stuffs are all grown on little individual holdings. Is the thing possible? What crops must be raised and

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how much of each are questions which the Community must decide if it wants to decide what manufactured goods it must have; what factories it must build; what food it must consume; what materials it must export in order to import the goods it needs.

This is not possible unless agriculture is organised in larger units than an individual holding. With each village becoming a unit for agricultural production and with each unit working in unison with the others, working as a part of an organised economy, this could be made possible. Of course, the State, by preferential taxation, may stimulate or curtail the production of given crops even under individualistic agriculture, and thus establish some control over agricultural production, as they did in the early days in Russia. But this would not take the State very far on the road to planning.

Then, again, consider long-time planning. Say, it is desired within a period of years to double the agricultural production of India. Could this be done if agriculture continued to be on an individualistic basis? Of course, one could educate the farmer in improved methods of cultivation and so on; but that alone would not be sufficient. There are limits to agricultural production when the land is subdivided into little plots individually cultivated.

Take again the problem of establishing a balance between agriculture and industry. There can be no solution of the agricultural problem, unless this balance has been established. But this, again, requires co-operative effort and planning, and here again individualistic farming would prove a stumbling block.

If we look at the problem from the point of view of psychology, we shall find that Socialism in agriculture, i.e., co-operative and collective farming is essential for the success of any attempt to recast Indian life on a socialist basis. I have often been asked: why can we not organise our industry on a socialist basis and leave agriculture on the present individualistic one? Our answer is that the exist-

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ence of the two standards—individualism on one hand and Socialism on the other—would create such maladjustments and friction that the whole hybrid system would be paralysed. Socialism can never go with millions of peasants, owning their own patches of land, cultivating them for their own profit—narrow, selfish peasants. In the same community, a part, the smaller part in India and most other countries, cannot live and work in a corporate manner, while the remaining, and larger part, remains wedded to individualism—with all its waste product of social friction and frustration.

If Socialism has to be built up in a country, corporate life and standards must also grow up in the village along with their growth in the cities.

Thus, look at the problem from whichever side you please, the application of socialist principle to Indian agriculture is inescapable.

What exactly, then, is socialist agriculture, what is co-operative and collective farming?

We all know something about the old Indian village commune. It is true that this was neither the most ancient nor the most common form of agricultural organisation known in India. It finds no mention in the *Manusmriti*. However, it is indisputable that there were long periods of Indian history and long tracts of Indian territory in which a form of village existed—whatever its origin—in which common tenure of land and sometimes also common tillage, were organised and practised. In Madras such villages existed till the other day.

The socialist aim follows in spirit the lines of the old system—except that the socialist village instead of being a closed circle, a closed economic unit, would be an actively co-operating unit in a larger economic system.

In Russia, where alone in our day Socialism is being built up and where a serious attempt has been made, with remarkable success, to socialise agriculture—an agriculture, mind you, no less primitive, no less hidebound by

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tradition and dominated no less by an ignorant, indolent, narrowly-selfish peasantry—two types of socialised agriculture, rather three, have grown up.

The first form, that we witness, is simply co-operative farming. Under this system, individual holdings remain (though much equalised by the redistribution of the land of the landlords and the capitalist farmers); the old agricultural instruments, horses, etc., remain individual property; but for the purposes of cultivation, the holdings are pooled together and the crop is raised and harvested with joint labour. The produce is distributed according to the size of the holding and the amount of labour put in, after costs have been accounted for.

This is the first lesson in social living. It promotes a community of spirit and by materially increasing the output, it becomes an incentive to the individualistic peasant to take more kindly to community of life and work.

Next step from this is the collective farm. Here no individual holding remains and the basis of distribution is only the amount of labour put in and in some unusual cases, unusual needs. But even in the collective village, individual ownership of tools may yet remain, and pigs and cattle and horses may yet be the property of individuals. While an immense growth in communal living has taken place, yet much of life is lived apart.

So we see as the third stage, the "communes" rise, where there is the utmost possible common living.

Let us be slow instead of hasty as the Russians. Let us use no coercion. Nor does the Party advocate forcible socialization of agriculture, as it does with industry. *Encouragement and promotion* of co-operative and collective farming is the phrase used—encouragement and promotion through education, propaganda, demonstration, subsidy, preferential taxation.

We might use fewer labour-saving agricultural machinery in view of our population and the shortage of land as compared with the virgin expanses of Russia's territory.

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This does not mean that we shall retain the present inefficient plough but perhaps we may not require, at least till industrial development absorbs the surplus rural population, many tractors and mechanical reapers and binders. We shall electrify the village and give it radio and criticised as being mere imitators of the West. But we are not out to imitate. We only wish to learn.

There is a certain type of confused and often interested person who goes about the country saying that the socialists will take away the land from the peasants. We socialists do not have an island across the seas where we shall transport all the land we shall "confiscate" from the peasants. The lands will be where they are and the peasants will have them and cultivate them. The question only is *how* the peasants shall cultivate their land so that society may benefit most—the peasants themselves more than anyone else.

The only plea that we put forth is that social good rather than the good of a small number of individuals should be our goal. And I think, I have been able to show that if the land is tilled in common—better still, if it is owned in common too, a great boon would be conferred on India's entire rural population. The village would be transformed from its present mean position to one of prosperity and culture, unknown in any age of Indian history.

IV

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I

What the Congress Socialist Party Stands For?

THE objects of the Congress Socialist Party, as laid down in its Constitution, are "the achievement of complete independence, in the sense of separation from the British Empire, and the establishment of a socialist society."

This is direct and simple enough. The Party has two objects: The first is the same as that of the Indian National Congress, except that the Party wishes to make it clear that the complete independence of India must include separation from the British Empire.

The second object of the Party means that Independent India must reorganise its economic life on a socialist basis.

Why?

The question at bottom is one of values and ultimate objectives, which once determined, the rest becomes a matter of logical sequence.

If the ultimate objective is to make the masses politically and economically free, to make them prosperous and happy, to free them from all manner of exploitation, to give them unfettered opportunity for development, then, Socialism becomes a goal to which one must irresistibly be drawn. If again, the objective is to take hold of the chaotic and conflicting forces of society and to fashion the latter according to the ideal of utmost social good and to harness of all conscious directives of human intelligence in the service of the commonwealth, then, again, Socialism becomes an inescapable destination.

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If, then, these be our objectives, it should take little argument, to show that Socialism is as definitely "indicated" in India as elsewhere. In India too there is poverty, nay, starvation, on the one hand and wealth and luxury on the other; in India too there is exploitation; the means of production here also are in private hands. That is, the root evil of modern society, namely, economic and social inequality, exists in India too as does its cause; the exploitation of the great many by the very few.

And this is not the result of British rule. It is independent of it and will continue even after it. The ending of the foreign domination would not automatically solve Indian's problem of poverty; would not put a stop to the exploitation of the vast many; would not in fact, mean the accomplishment of any of the objectives which we have started with. Economic freedom is also indispensable.

As far as we socialists are concerned economic freedom means only one thing to us—*Socialism*. Without Socialism, economic freedom would be a sham, and moonshine.

The present programme of the Congress falls far short of these ideals. It might ameliorate the conditions of the masses to a certain extent, but it will neither rid them of exploitation nor put them in power. Far from effecting revolutionary changes in it, it leaves the economic structure of society intact. It leaves capitalists, landlords and princes on the one side and workers, tenants and subjects on the other. It leaves the means of production in the hands of private individuals, except in the sphere of key industries. The entire economic organisation, based as it is on the exploitation of the poor and middle classes, is preserved. This is not economic freedom. The preamble and substance of the Karachi Resolution are at wide variance with each other. What we endeavour to do is to remove this variance and bring them close together. When the Congress professes the economic freedom of the masses, let it distinctly state what that freedom means.

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The Congress may be unprepared for the acceptance of such a minimum programme as we advocate. But it is one thing to say that we are not ready for any further definition of our goal—which of course may be disputed—and quite another, as latterly repeated *ad nauseam*, that Socialism is moonshine; that it is unsuited to the Indian climate; that Indian socialists are merely adventuring in the realm of theory; that they are only quoting a rusty old German Jew who called himself Karl Heinrich Marx; and the rest of the drivel.

I do not desire to suggest that at Karachi, the Congress should have outlined a full-grown programme of Socialism. What it must do, however, is to accept such a minimum economic programme as will, when put to practice, free the masses from economic exploitation and transfer full political and economic power into their hands.

It is such a programme that the Congress Socialist Party is advocating.

What, then, does the Congress Socialist Party propose? What must the Swaraj Government do in addition to nationalising key industries in order to realise the economic freedom of the masses; in order to rid them of exploitation, injustice, suffering, poverty, ignorance?

The measures that are necessary, in the opinion of the Party to achieve this, are clearly set forth in the *Objectives* section of the *Programme* of the All-India Congress Socialist Party.

Here they are:

1. Transfer of all power to the producing masses.
2. Development of the economic life of the country *to be planned and controlled by the state.*
3. *Socialisation of key and principal industries (e.g., Steel, Cotton, Jute, Railways, Shipping, Plantations, Mines), Banks, Insurance and Public Utilities, with a view to the progressive socializa-*

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tion of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange.

4. State monopoly of foreign trade.
5. Organisation of co-operatives for production, distribution and credit in the unsocialized sector of economic life.
6. Elimination of princes and landlords and all other classes of exploiters without compensation.
7. Redistribution of land to peasants.
8. Encouragement and promotion of co-operative and collective farming by the State.
9. Liquidation of debts owing by peasants and workers.
10. Recognition of the right to work or maintenance by the State.
11. "To every one according to his needs and from every one according to his capacity" to be the basis ultimately of distribution and production of economic goods.
12. Adult franchise on a functional basis.
13. No support to or discrimination between religions by the State and no recognition of any distinction based on caste or community.
14. No discrimination between the sexes by the State.
15. Repudiation of the so-called Public Debt of India.

There are fifteen measures as we see. They look forbidding; appear to be too drastic; too extreme; too foreign sounding. They are, in fact, simple enough, reasonable enough, just and practicable enough. And as for their foreign sound—well, they sound no more foreign than the Constituent Assembly, the Legislative Council, the Tariff Board, the siren of the cotton mills or the hooting of the latest Cadillac (shall we say?)

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They are all intended to establish the rather simple principle that the abolition of private ownership, of functional property, which, as we saw, was the real villain of the piece—the source of all our evils, or most of them. They are further intended to establish the most eminently reasonable of principles of social life—social planning.

2

*Presidential Address at the Bengal C.S.P. Conference (1935)**

Comrades,

I AM grateful to you for the honour you have done me by inviting me to preside over this conference. Being the first Provincial Conference of your Party, it possesses a unique importance. Much of the future of our movement in this province will depend upon the lead that this conference gives. I, therefore, wish that you have entrusted the responsibility of conducting its proceedings to abler and more experienced hands. However, I hope that with your co-operation I shall be able to discharge my duties to your satisfaction.

Bengal, of all the provinces in India, has occupied a premier political position. It has been in the vanguard of the country's freedom movement since the beginning. In suffering and sacrifice it is easily the first province in the country. Even at the present moment, whole districts of the province are subject to virtual martial law. Thousands of Bengal's youngmen—some of them with the promise of the most brilliant careers—lie wasting in jails, without as much as a charge having been framed against them in a court of law. The Bengal Government enjoys the unique but doubtful reputation of depriving its citizens of their liberty without having proved their guilt. And yet the Governor of the province, Sir John Anderson, remarked the other day that it was ignorance that prompted people to demand the release or trial of the detenus. It is true that the public does not possess the facts that the Secret Service has made available to Sir John. But that is no reason why the public should condone acts which offend

* First Session : Calcutta, September, 21, 22, 23, 1935

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against all canons of civilized law. If Sir John Anderson is so sure of his facts, why does he not produce them in a court of law and have them established? As long as his Government refuses to do this, the public will continue to condemn its action and to demand the release of those who have been deprived of their liberty without any known cause. In the words of Babu Rajendra Prasad, the President of the Congress, the Government "have no reason to complain if the public are not prepared to accept their view, subversive as it is of all recognised principles of civilized jurisprudence."

The demand for justice being done to the detenus has been brushed aside by the Governor of Bengal as ignorance or pro-terrorism. Under the latter pretext, all efforts in behalf of the detenus have been suppressed in this province, thanks to the black laws with which the executive has provided itself here. Outside Bengal where the black laws have no jurisdiction, the detenu agitation is disposed of on the plea of ignorance. Official effrontery never before presented itself in a more brazen form. It is well that the Government should realise clearly and once for all that the demand for the release of the detenus has nothing to do with terrorism nor is it based on ignorance. It is based, as a matter of fact, on one of the most elementary principles of civilized society, viz., that no person should be deprived of his liberty without due processes of law. The country's case in this connection cannot be put better than in these words of the President of the Congress: "The Governor of Bengal in his address to the Bengal Legislative Council divided those who pressed for the release or in the alternative for the trial of Bengal detenus into two classes, viz., those who were in secret sympathy with terrorism and therefore should be regarded as out of court and those who though well-meaning were ignorant of the real state of affairs and therefore deserved no consideration. He ignored the third class which I believe, is the largest in the country and which has among it persons

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holding diverse political views and belonging to diverse parties. That third class comprises persons who hold the liberty of person as sacred and who strongly believe that none should be deprived of his or her liberty except as a result of a trial openly held in accordance with canons of civilized law."

REPRESSION IN BENGAL

The country has only recently begun to realise the gravity of the detenu question. Till practically the middle of last year we were in the midst of a great national struggle. Every province at that time had its own troubles, its own share of repression. Bengal, though being incomparably the worst sufferer of all, remained, therefore, a provincial issue. But not entirely so. Even during that period such eminent leaders as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru showed considerable concern for the province and you are all aware that it was for pleading your case that he was imprisoned.

When the Satyagraha movement was withdrawn, the strain of the struggle left us unprepared to take up immediately any such issue as that of Bengal. Gradually, however, the Bengal question, particularly the question of the detenus, rose to prominence. It has now become a countrywide issue, though much remains to be done.

It should be a matter of satisfaction to us that our Party has played a considerable part in bringing this issue to the fore. The Detenu Day which we observed last March in a way marked the beginning of this agitation on an all-India basis.

It should also be a matter of satisfaction for all of us that the President of the Congress, Babu Rajendra Prasad, has been giving his particular attention to this question since he assumed office.

But, as I said above, there remains a great deal to be done yet. The demand for the release of the detenus is still very feeble. Much more publicity is required to be

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given to this question than it has received so far. And the publicity should be extended to foreign countries also, particularly to England. Mr. C. F. Andrews has already led the way in this direction. He must be followed up by others.

On behalf of my Party I assure the people of Bengal, and the detenus particularly, that we shall always stand by them and do all we can to help them.

The question of the detenus is not the only outstanding problem in Bengal. Under the pretext of putting down terrorism, the Bengal Government has made all national and mass activities impossible. Many Congress bodies, Khadi organisations, trade unions, peasant organizations, student associations, presses and publications have been placed under a ban. Those which are not actually banned have to live under the perpetual surveillance of the Secret Service.

To strengthen my assertion I shall quote again from the statement of the Congress President. "But to-day they are bent on perpetuating the lawless laws", runs the statement, "depriving people of personal liberty, liberty of association and liberty of expression of views on the platform and through the press at the will of the executive, and they have been enforcing such laws with all their rigour and not unoften misapplying them to conditions for which they were never intended. Consider the number of presses and newspapers which have been penalized, the number of Associations, including Labour organizations and Congress organizations which are banned, the number of individuals who have been deprived of their liberty without any of those being tried and condemned by a court of law, and it becomes clear to what extent the Government can go even when things are more or less quiet."

There is no need of my going into the details of this question. You who belong to this province know them much better than I do. The real question before us is,

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what can we do in the matter? It is clear that Bengal alone is helpless. The other provinces must come to its aid.

As in the case of the detenus, publicity is the chief remedy here also. The public does not know all the facts. I believe that if all that was happening in Bengal was made known to the country and to the civilized world outside, such a storm of protest and condemnation would be let loose that even the Bengal Government would be compelled to bend down before it.

CIVIL LIBERTIES

This cannot be done, however, unless there is an organization which takes it up as its sole activity. I wish to place before you a suggestion in this regard, though I must tell you that I am not its author. Bengal, though suffering the most from the evils of an arbitrary rule, is not alone in its suffering. The whole country is in a manner subject to it; and acts of high-handedness and unlawful victimization are not uncommon elsewhere even in normal times. Most of these acts would not be committed if the public were a little vigilant and if there were some organization, the task of which was to bring such acts to light and put up a fight against them, through the law-courts, the legislatures, the press and the platform.

It is, therefore, suggested that a non-political association should be formed, the business of which should be to defend the ordinary right of citizenship,—rights that are enjoyed by every member of any civilized society. You have heard of the Civil Liberties Union of the U. S. A., which under the able leadership of Mr. Roger Baldwin has done extremely valuable work. There are also many international organizations for the protection of the working man's rights and interests. This association which is suggested here should also be on similar lines. It should be formed not of political workers but of leading jurists of the country; eminent publicists and journalists; women workers (for women are the worst sufferers); social

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workers, like some of those of the Servants of India Society, and so on. It should be an all-India body and should have intimate contacts with kindred foreign organizations. It should collect facts; publish literature; organize legal defence, raise funds for sufferers; do foreign propaganda; cause questions, resolutions etc., to be asked or moved in the legislatures and so on. Is it not a pity that in spite of all that has happened in Bengal, there is not even one pamphlet published which gives even the bare facts? Such a pamphlet should have been placed in the hands of every public man in India, every member of Parliament, every organization in Europe and America that is interested in the civil liberties of the people. If we turn the merciless lights of publicity on every act of official excess, we shall be able if not to totally stop them, at least, to reduce them greatly.

There has been recently some talk of foreign propaganda. It may be true that general nationalist propaganda in the West is not very fruitful; but I have no doubt that a propaganda which exposes specific acts and measures of official terrorism will prove effective. I may add that its efficacy will be in proportion to the accuracy and regard for truth that the Association shows in its work.

I think that there is ample material in the country to form such an association. The first step is to find a competent individual, with a status in public life, who has travelled in the country and abroad, to take the initiative. Such an individual must give his whole time to the association and should be paid by it. I do not think that the cost of running such an association would be more than Rs. 5000/- per year—a sum which can be easily raised for a cause such as this. I do hope that some one from Bengal would come forward and take up the work.

I hope you will not misunderstand me and take me as saying that this Association alone will be sufficient to deal with the problem. The Association will do very valu-

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able work, but not the whole of it. I have already suggested other necessary measures.

I shall take up next certain other issues which loom large on the political horizon of Bengal.

THE COMMUNAL PROBLEM

The first of these is the communal problem. Bengal is one of those provinces, the minority community of which is said to have been wronged most by the so-called Communal Award. While non-Hindu minorities have been given special treatment elsewhere, the Hindu minority of this province has been particularly discriminated against. The Hindu politicians of the province are naturally in a flurry over this and have formed a party which is called, paradoxically enough, the "Nationalist Party".

Let us look at this question little more closely.

The question whether the Communal Award is good or bad is one which admits of no controversy. There cannot be two opinions about it. For me it is sufficient reason to condemn it that it is an award of the British Premier. That high executive of imperialism could not have been allowed to commit such a grave public lapse as to do India a good turn. The Communal Award was deliberately calculated to exploit the communal tension in the interests of imperialism. Subsequent events have borne this out. We shall have further proofs when the New Constitution begins to work. That a few individuals of this or that community have benefited or will benefit by it does not alter the basic reality. The Communal Award is the greatest single anti-national factor in our political life today.

And that brings us to the real problem. Granted that the Communal Award is bad, what should be our attitude towards it? Shall we be foolish and play into the hands of the imperialists or shall we be wise and foil their attempts?

When we say that the Communal Award is bad, what do we mean? Where does its badness lie? Does it lie in

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the fact that so many seats have been given to the Muslims and so many to the Hindus, or in the fact that it has become an instrument of communal discord? From the nationalist point of view, it matters not a whit how many seats Muslims or Hindus have got. They are both Indians, and, granting that seats do any good, whichever community benefits, the nation benefits. The real mischief of the Communal Award is in its potency to take advantage of our foolishness in sowing seeds of discord. If that be so, are we acting in the national interest if we deliberately aggravate that mischief? If the Muslims or Sikhs get a few more seats than the Hindus, India is not the loser; but if we fall out and quarrel among ourselves, we not only lose heavily but we do so to the tremendous profit of the outsider. To fight over the Communal Award is like the serpent swallowing his own tail.

The exasperated "nationalist" may cry: "what is the solution, then?" The solution of what? I shall ask him. If he is looking for a solution which will set right the disproportion between Hindu and Muslim representation in the Bengal Legislative Council, I am afraid, I have no such solution for him. I am not even interested in the question. A few seats more or less for this or that community is not of the least consequence to our struggle for freedom.

If, however, he is looking for a solution which will bring both Muslims and Hindus in their full strength into the freedom movement, I do have an answer for him and I believe, the only answer.

The communal question in Bengal as in other parts of the country is largely an economic question and has resulted from the fact that the Muslims are nearly all tenants, and the landlords are nearly all Hindus. There has always been a serious conflict between the Bengal tenant and landlord; and peasant uprisings have been quite frequent here. But since the class division nearly coincides with the communal division this conflict and these clashes have

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often been given a communal colour. It is well-known that religious fanaticism and economic radicalism often go hand-in-hand among the Muslim masses of the province. Just as the Irish under Protestant Britain clung fanatically to their Catholicism and the Czechs under Catholic Austria turned free thinkers, so the Muslim peasants of Bengal under Hindu landlords are as easily susceptible to communal passion as to the idea of the abolition of zamindaris.

In a modified form this is true even outside Bengal. Where the class and communal divisions cross each other, instead of coinciding, the communal question is confined to the upper layer of the social stratum—to men who are desirous of posts and positions, seats and titles.

This being the background of the communal problem, how is it to be solved?

It is clear that if we continued to wrangle for seats in the legislatures, we shall only aggravate the malady. The masses, whether Muslim, Hindu or of any other community, have no interest in the communal distribution of these seats. It may be that today they are persuaded by demagogues into supporting this or the other proportion of communal representation, but their basic interest lies in an entirely different manner of representation. The Hindu labourer and the Muslim labourer have identical interests and if they are made conscious of them, they would forthwith denounce and repudiate communal representation and demand the representation of their common economic and political interests.

The communal question, as it exists today, affects only a small class, the class which is directly interested, purely for the gratification of personal ambitions and desires, in legislative elections and jobs and employments in the departments of the Government. This class taking advantage of broader causes of communal conflict such as exist in Bengal due to the economic circumstances, I have already mentioned, seek, and unfortunately succeed, to give

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to their claims and wranglings a much wider sanction than they would have otherwise possessed.

What is the duty of the "nationalist" in these circumstances? In my humble opinion there are only two courses he must follow, if he genuinely desires to solve the communal problem. Let me remind him again that that problem consists not in amending the percentages of communal seats so as to suit better the claim of this or the other community—which invariably means the self-seeking upper fringe of that community—but to endeavour to bring all the various communities wholeheartedly into the freedom movement.

The courses that suggest themselves to me are: firstly, a total withdrawal from the wrangling for legislative seats; secondly, the linking up of the freedom movement with the economic struggle of the masses.

My first suggestion would seem to cut the ground from under the feet of the Bengal Nationalist Party, which, I do not wish to deny, enjoys a great popularity among the Hindu population of the Province. The popularity rests, however, not so much on the issue being a popular one, as in the fact that the educated upper class in this province has taken advantage of its prestige and of the estranged relations between the two communities to arouse popular sentiment on this entirely false issue. For, the issue is a false one. The millions of the Hindus of this province cannot in any manner gain by a few more Hindu seats in the Bengal Legislative Council. Nor do those millions have interests which are different from the interests of the Muslim millions.

The Bengal Nationalist Party, unlike such parties in some other provinces, is formed of genuine, even militant, Congressmen. I ask these friends if they are in any way helping the freedom movement, the cause of the people of the country, by generating the hostilities, the suspicions, the bickerings, which must be the natural issue of their policy. I ask them if they are not weakening the move-

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ment for independence, if not diverting it into fruitless, nay, dangerous channels?

The Congress exists and Congressmen exist not to fight the Communal Award but the system whose instrument it is.

I now come to the second course. I have said that we must link the freedom movement with the economic struggle of the masses. This, of course, is a basic tactics with us. But just now I have to discuss it only as a solvent of the communal problem. Later I shall return to it to consider it as a technic of mass action.

The communal problem exists, i.e., we fail to draw, let us say, the Muslim masses, into the national struggle, because we fail to inspire confidence in them. Our movement is not a mass movement. It is not the problem of the masses that we discuss, that guide our action, that determine our social philosophy. Our outlook is yet limited by middle class ambitions and desires. That is why the distribution of seats looms so large on our horizon. If we were leading a genuine mass movement, the masses of all communities would gather round our banner; in other words, the communal problem would have ceased to exist.

As an instance of how we fail to inspire confidence among the masses let me remind you of how the Bengal Swaraj Party years ago caused a Tenancy Bill to be passed through the Legislative Council in the teeth of the opposition of the ryots. You will recall that Muslim opinion was bitterly hostile to that Bill. Consider for a moment what would have been the effect had the Swaraj Party brought in, as it would have if it were a mass party, a Bill which was in the interest of the ryots. It would have secured the unstinted support of the Muslim community—at least, of the 98 per cent of it. But, as it happened, the Swarajists only succeeded in creating the impression that the Congress was a Hindu and Zamindar organization.

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This, as every one can see, was a fatal impression as far as creating confidence was concerned.

It is clear from this incident that if we adopt a programme which is in the interest of the masses, if we participate in their struggle for economic emancipation, we shall have no difficulty in getting their support and following. And when we do that, the communal problem disappears, because the masses include all communities.

I, therefore, suggest that if Bengal Congressmen want to solve the communal problem, they must, first, unequivocally declare for the abolition of the Zamindari system, and, second, they must seriously set out to enquire into the present difficulties of the tenants and organize them for their removal. A tenants' movement, with the slogan of abolition of zamindaris in the foreground, is the best and only solution of the communal problem in Bengal. Besides liquidating this problem, such a movement will also prepare the masses for the achievement of independence—political and economic.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Now I shall touch a little upon the subject of unemployment in Bengal. Unemployment among the poor is a chronic ailment all over India. But middle class unemployment is perhaps the most acute in Bengal.

If there is any social phenomenon more responsible than another, for turning men's minds to the examination of existing society and to proposals for the creation of a better one, it is unemployment. There is no more forceful argument against it than the *status quo*.

What is the solution of the unemployment problem? Is it provincialism, nationalism?

It is strange that in such an intellectually progressive province as Bengal, provincialism should be considered in certain sections, as a solution of problem, the roots of which are very much deeper. It is not a problem which admits of such an easy solution. Unemployment results

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from the maladjustment between production and consumption which is an irremovable feature of capitalist society. It can be cured only when this maladjustment is cured, i.e., when society is reorganized on a socialist basis. We see this being demonstrated in the present world. While every capitalist country is suffering from unemployment, Soviet Russia, which is yet only on the road to Socialism, is entirely free from it.

It follows from what I have said that not even national independence will be able to remove unemployment. We have only to look at the independent countries of the world to be convinced of this. Socialism is its only cure.

Therefore, I shall say this to my unemployed comrades: Come and join us. You might reply that we have nothing but an idea to offer you. Yes, but, I assure you, the other parties and persuasions have nothing more; and their ideas will not be of the least service to you.

OUR ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NEW CONSTITUTION

Now I wish to consider with you the attitude that we should adopt towards the New Constitution that has been forged for us by the imperial power.

You recall that the Working Committee of the Congress decided at Wardha that this question should be settled only at the Lucknow Congress. The final decision always lies with the annual session of the Congress. What the Working Committee really meant to say was that it was not prepared to express its opinion yet. The Working Committee not only refused to express its opinion as a committee; it also placed a ban, through its President, on its members from expressing their individual opinions. The result is that the country is deprived of the guidance of these leaders in discussing, analysing, examining this complicated question. It is not clear to me how this state of things has been considered desirable by our leaders. Unless the question is previously discussed threadbare and

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unless the opinion of the Congress leaders is known beforehand, it would not be possible to reach an intelligent and democratic decision at Lucknow. A few speeches cannot be expected to consolidate opinion in a few hours at the Congress Session.

Perhaps the President was anxious to maintain the unity of his cabinet. But, the reported resignation of Sardar Sardul Singh shows that that policy too has its dangers.

You are all aware, I expect, of the move made to convene a conference of those Congressmen who are opposed to the policy of acceptance of ministerial offices under the new constitution which has been advocated by certain Congress leaders. We expect that this move will help to mobilize opinion on this issue and give the much desired lead. In this connection, I am happy to note that the Bengal Nationalist Party has already decided against acceptance of offices and, if I mistake not, your Dinajpur Political Conference also reached the same decision.

I take this opportunity to place my views and the views of my Party before you in this regard.

What is the situation before us? Briefly, that the imperialist power is attempting to force upon us a device for the further perpetuation of its domination. I need not describe that device to you with all its traps and dangers. It has been fully analysed in the Indian Press and it has declared that it would rather struggle under the existing order of things than have the new dispensation. The new dispensation will however be upon us in a few months, in spite of our rejection.

The question is what should we do with it?

Before going into details, let us consider some broad principles of policy. Remember, I am discussing the issue from the point of view of the Congress; i.e., trying to discover what should be the policy of the Congress in this regard.

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The first course that suggests itself is to work the constitution for what it is worth. This is the policy that the Liberal Party would adopt, notwithstanding its severe condemnation of the constitution. In doing that the Liberal Party would be acting logically; mind you, I do not say correctly. Logically, because the Liberal Party knows only one method of political work—constitutionalism.

Now, the Congress long ago gave up its belief in constitutionalism and embraced direct action as its basic policy. The respective strengths of the Liberal and Congress parties show which has been the more fruitful and correct of the two.

Direct action and constitutionalism are incompatible. The Congress cannot truthfully profess its faith in the former, if it agrees to work the constitution. I need not dilate on this point because I think no Congressman will be found to disagree with it. I doubt if even the great ministry-enthusiast, Mr. Satyamurti will disagree.

But there is a catch in this agreement. While the ministerialists, by which term I mean those Congressmen who favour holding of ministerial offices, hastily agree that the Congress cannot even contemplate holding of offices, the proposals they put forth virtually amount to the same thing. But we shall examine this question later.

So, if it is agreed that we cannot work the constitution, what must we do? What policy should the Congress accept? Our answer is that where possible, i.e., where the Congress has a majority, we should make its working impossible. The Working Committee in its resolution on the J. P. C. Report said that "the Joint Parliamentary Committee scheme designed as it is to facilitate and perpetuate the domination and exploitation of this country by an alien people under a costly mask is fraught with greater mischief and danger than even the present constitution." And, further on, that "this Committee is of opinion that the said scheme should be rejected well knowing that the rejection must involve the necessity of struggling under

the present constitution, humiliating and intolerable as it is."

Such being the opinion of the Congress, does it not follow as a natural corollary that the Congress policy should be to carry out the decision of rejection, by forcing the Governor to continue the administration by the exercise of his special powers?

Lest this policy should be considered futile and barren, I quote some very interesting remarks of a British statesman. Captain Wedgewood Benn, writing on the 'Outlook on the Indian Reforms' in the "Political Quarterly" for July-September, 1935, hazards some guesses about the policy that the Congress would be likely to follow with regard to what he has termed the Indian Reforms.

He begins by asking: "The most powerful, the best organised and the most important of all Indian National parties is the Congress. What will they do?" He thinks that "in all, but a few of the Provincial Assemblies, they (Congress candidates) will secure a victory." Then he goes on to say that, and this is interesting, "the Congress candidates, if elected, will undoubtedly attempt to wreck the constitution."

Discussing the underlying principle of Congress policy he says "The issues they (Congress members of Legislatures) will present will not be offered as local at all. Everything will be put into the guise of opposition to the hated British Domination. *The issue which they wish to keep before the public, that of British versus India, will be most clearly presented of course.*" I want you to take special note of this, "*if they can force the Governor into the use of autocratic powers which he now possesses in an unprecedented degree.*" This is a most significant statement, coming as it does from such high quarters. Capt. Benn adds: "The technique of the Irish, which has been closely studied in India, will be copied, possibly with success."

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Looking at the present drift of Congress policy, one doubts, if it will be. .

However, Capt. Benn has gone to the root of the problem. If there is any issue which it is the duty of the Congress to keep perpetually before the public, it is that of Britain versus India, as he puts it. And by forcing the Governor to continue his administration without the aid of ministers this issue is kept alive.

To elucidate this point further, as it does not seem to be clear to many of us, it is better to look for a while at a very important aspect of the new constitution, which I am afraid has not been kept before the public eye as prominently as it ought to have been. The new constitution, without transferring any real power to the ministers, creates the fiction of responsible government in the provinces. The British Power withdraws itself into the background keeping all the leading strings in its hands. This means that the issue, Britain versus India, is covered up by this subterfuge. The issue, in fact, is turned into "the people versus the party in office," in other words, one part of the people versus the other part. This from the British point of view is a master stroke of political craft. By thus blurring the issue, the British politicians wish to destroy the directness and keenness of the Indian struggle. They further seek to shift the responsibility of carrying on an unpopular administration to the shoulders of Indian ministers, thus hoping to dull the edge of popular resentment against them.

There is a difference between Indian ministers and "members of Government" of the present, and the ministers of the new constitution. At present the position is that the foreign power is able to secure the services of individual Indians, who in return for a title and a consideration carry on the administration for the British. Under the new arrangements, ministers will represent parties, which in turn will represent a section of the electorate. For the actions of the ministry, a party, and ultimately a

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section of the people itself, will be responsible, at least in theory—and not the British Government. What use a clever governor will make of this situation can well be imagined. Of course, it is obvious what will happen. It has often been said that imperialism has attempted through this constitution to strengthen itself in the face of gathering mass of discontent by rallying around it the vested interests in the country. These “responsible” ministries would be the constitutional mechanism through which this plan would be put into practice. The vested interests will become a facade behind which imperialism will continue its rule. But I am digressing.

To return to the original point, I was saying that the issue of India versus Britain can most clearly be brought out only by forcing the suspension of the constitution, where this is possible.

This is a course desirable for another reason also. We rejected the J. P. C. Report. After that Report has been made a fact in the new constitution, shall we drop our policy of rejection? Remember that the British have always been counting on the constitution being worked. It is with that belief that they went on, most cynically disregarding the counsel even of their Indian friends, with their reactionary measure. The Government members in the Legislative Assembly have often mockingly replied to the Opposition that however much it may howl against the “reforms” every one would come back and work them.

Under these circumstances it is the duty of the Congress party wherever in a majority, to defeat the objects of the foreign power and to foil their well-laid plans by showing that the constitution they have laboured so long to perfect is a broken reed and that Governor must carry on the administration himself. The impression that this will create in India and abroad would be infinitely superior to any thing that can be achieved by any other tactics. From the point of view of keeping up the spirit of the

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Congress, which after all is the thing that matters, there can be no better course to follow.

It is said that there will be no popular enthusiasm for this policy, because it will not enable the Congress party to throw any crumbs to the people. This is a pathetic plea.

The manner in which the electorate responds depends entirely on the manner in which the issue is presented to it. If we go to it in a defeatist, apologist frame of mind, it is clear we shall fail to inspire confidence. If, on the other hand, our campaign is marked with vigour, our case presented aggressively, the electorate is bound to respond. Suppose that on this constitutional issue a whirlwind propaganda is carried on, raising the one issue of wrecking the constitution, on the ground that it has been thrust on us forcibly and is a michievous device for our further enslavement. I feel sure that in that case we shall be able to arouse sufficient enthusiasm to be returned every time in a majority. Even if we don't we shall have done excellent political propaganda during the election campaign which will prove its utility when we resort to direct action again. For, all our efforts must lead to that.

There is another important aspect of this policy which makes its acceptance well-nigh imperative by the Congress. In its resolution on the J. P. C. Report the Working Committee declared that "the only satisfactory alternative (to the constitution adumbrated in the Report) is a constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly." I might remark parenthetically that it is curious to note that since the half-hearted reference to the Constituent Assembly made at the last Assembly elections, there has been no talk about it again. Indeed, a member of the Working Committee, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, has in a recent interview poohpooed the whole idea as applied to current politics. "To talk of the latter (the Constituent Assembly)," he concludes his interview, "in our retreat is to cover it up with undue hope, if not bluff." One wonders if the Working Committee was bluffing when it made the

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solemn declaration I have just quoted. At any rate, I wonder if the President's ban on his colleagues is only in regard to the ministry question or also on making light, in the manner of the Andhra Doctor, of the considered decisions of his cabinet.

However, if the only satisfactory alternative to a constitution devised in Westminster is a constitution drawn up by a Constituent Assembly, is it not our duty to raise the slogan of the Constituent Assembly during the coming election and place it before the electorate as the only alternative, as we have said in our resolution? It may be urged that the Constituent Assembly is a distant prospect and therefore it is mere bluff, as Dr. Pattabhi says, to talk of it as an alternative to any current political measure. Is the Constituent Assembly more distant than independence, and yet have we not "declared" independence from a thousand platforms? Moreover, why, if it is a distant prospect, was it made a slogan at the last Assembly elections? In its resolution from which I have quoted before, the Working Committee expressed pleasure that the "demand for a Constituent Assembly has been endorsed in a clear and unambiguous manner by the country, at the recent general election to the Legislative Assembly." That demand was put forward as an alternative to the J. P. C. scheme which we were asked to reject. Now when that scheme is actually being foisted on us, should it not be our policy to raise the issue of the Constituent Assembly still more vigorously?

But if we do that on the one hand, we must say on the other that, where we can, we shall wreck that constitution by making its working impossible. Just as when the constitution was in the making and we were asked to consider it, rejection and the Constituent Assembly were complementary parts of a whole policy, so now when the constitution is an accomplished fact and we are asked to work it, wrecking and the Constituent Assembly are again the inseparable complements of any self-respecting policy that

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we may adopt. The slogan of the Constituent Assembly cannot be part of any election programme which contemplates acceptance of offices under the new constitution. Its counterpart can only be the slogan of wrecking.

Let us now consider the alternative proposal. I have said before that an objection is raised to this policy on the ground that the electorate would lose interest in it because it would not get any concrete and immediate benefits from it. Suppose that we adopt such a programme of benefits. If we really wanted to give benefits, we would have to remain in office as long as possible, because going out in that case would be a barren policy. At the same time it is well-known how much scope for ameliorative measures the constitution provides. In other words, we will have to work the reforms, and will have the satisfaction of finding at the end of the term of our ministries that very little has been done for the people—so little, indeed, that they have become as much dissatisfied with us as with the British. We shall also find that we have succeeded in killing that mentality of fight against government which is the soul of the Congress movement and in its place have taught the people to look for loaves and fishes to it. The argument of not being able to do any thing for the people if we follow a wrecking policy, leads inevitably to constitutionalism. There is no half-way house.

I have considered so far only our tactics in case the Congress has a majority. What should be its policy where it fails to be so successful?

Before taking up that question, let me examine briefly the case of those who are advocating acceptance of offices. First of all, we note that they absolutely overlook all the considerations I have urged. All the underlying principles of our movement, its psychological foundations, our past commitments—all these are given the go-by.

It is interesting to recall in this regard the old policy of the Congress when it decided in 1926 to contest elections: The A.I.C.C. laid it down that "Congressmen in the

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legislatures shall refuse to accept offices in the gift of the government until, in the opinion of the Congress, a satisfactory response is made by the Government". I wish to draw your attention particularly to the condition for accepting offices. The Government must make a satisfactory response. Considering the objectives of the Congress of those days, it was an honourable and self-respecting decision, consistent with the spirit of the times. The present Congress has travelled far away from its old objectives and it no longer looks for a "response" from the British Government. Is it not regretful therefore that Congressmen should advocate acceptance of offices under the present circumstances, and with no qualifications. It might be said that the offices are no longer in the gift of the Government. That would be a very superficial view of the matter. There is no popular sanction behind the constitution. The whole thing is a gift of the Government—withal a most unwelcome gift.

Thus the first thing the ministerialist seeks to do is to destroy a valuable psychological aspect of Congress policy.

What does it offer in return? It is difficult to say, because this point has not been made clear yet. Mr. Satyamurti and certain others have spoken of benefits and ameliorative measures; of clothing the services in khadi; of flying the national flag over government buildings and so on. A rather doubtful fare. The Congress which has stood for large measures cannot forsake them and seek to appeal to the electorate with a programme of petty reforms. If the Congress did so, it will divert the public mind from the basic and fundamental issues and teach the electorate and the people to look to the government for petty favours. This would mean the diverting of mass energy into fruitless channels and therefore the weakening of the national movement.

At the same time, it is obvious that if the Congress adopts a programme consistent with Congress policy and objective, it will be of such a far-reaching character that

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no Congress ministry would be allowed to carry it out. A Congress ministry can only be a very short-lived experiment under these conditions, leading us nowhere and greatly damaging some of our basic ideas and principles.

Here, I wish to pause a little to consider the suggestion that Mr. C. R. Reddy has made in a recent speech in the south. He suggested that there was a midway house between wrecking and working the constitution. The Congress Party should seek election on a proper Congress ticket and, if returned in a majority, it should take office, and try to work out its programme. If obstructed by the Governor, it should resign and seek re-election on the issue which created the deadlock.

This kind of political strategy can be suggested only by one who is used to thinking on constitutional lines alone. Consider, what this strategy does; it drops the slogan of basic opposition to the new constitution, of rejecting and wrecking it, of the Constituent Assembly; it destroys the valuable mentality that has been generated in the course of our struggle of always looking at the government as an opponent; it creates illusions in the people's mind regarding the capacity of ministries to solve their difficulties; and so on. Let us look at the other side of the shield. What does it achieve? Nothing except that a few Congressmen occupy the seats of government for some time—the time will depend on how soon Mr. Reddy considers the ground to have been prepared for a spectacular walk-out. The constituents would not have “benefited”, at all, because the deadlock would prevent the ministers from benefiting them. In other words, this strategy does not even have the merit of the *pucca* constitutionalist who gives the people what tiny benefits he finds possible to give. On the other hand the fight against the governor takes place not on the fundamental issue of India versus Britain but on something of much lesser importance. Mr. Reddy's suggestion is as dangerous as any other.

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I do not wish to devote much more time to this question. However, let me mention a few more dangers and risks that lie hidden in the programme of the ministerialists.

Take the election campaign itself. If it is decided that Congress should accept offices, then every attempt would be made by the Congress party to secure a majority. This would inevitably lead to compromise with non-Congress groups and the modification of the Congress programme in such a manner as to allow non-Congress and vested interests to join the Congress campaign. It was a genuine surprise to me when I came across a Hindi manifesto of the U.P. Congress Parliamentary Committee, issued over the signature of its assistant secretary during the last Assembly election, setting forth reasons why the landlords of the province must support the Congress candidates. The manifesto, in short, tried to make out that the Congress has always stood for and defended the rights of the landlords. It is interesting to note that the spirit of this manifesto runs wholly counter to another of the same committee, issued in English for the general voter. It is also interesting to recall that in this same province, a few years ago, a resolution was passed by the Provincial Political Conference advocating the elimination of all middlemen between the tiller of the soil and the State.

I have brought up this matter merely to show how the exigencies of winning a majority leads to watering down, vulgarising and distorting of even the present Congress ideals, moderate as they are. I do not for a moment believe that U.P. was an exception in this regard. This sort of thing must have happened everywhere.

So we see that at the very outset of this policy in the election campaign itself, there is compromise and a drift to the right. Whereas the election campaign should be utilised for raising fundamental issues, for educating the masses, for organising them, we will be led to make com-

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promises and to give up the more revolutionary slogans and programmes.

Then the dangers after the ministries have been actually formed are not negligible—the dangers, I mean, of demoralization, leading in the end to constitutionalism on the one hand and serious disruption of the Congress ranks on the other.

So far I have discussed with you only the policy which should be followed in the case of the Congress securing majorities. I have taken so much of your time in discussing this question because I felt that of all present issues it is of the greatest significance to the growth of the freedom movement.

Now, I shall briefly touch upon the policy the Congress Party should follow where in a minority. The policy of the old Swaraj Party was “one of determined resistance and obstruction to every activity, Governmental or other, that may impede the nation’s progress towards Swaraj” coupled with enactment of ameliorative measures. We suggest an improvement upon this. Mere obstruction will not be sufficient. We must also use the legislatures as tribunes for voicing the people’s grievances, their rights and demands. The most effective form of legislative activity is one which brings the struggle that is waged outside into the legislative chamber. This means that the Congress must attempt to develop mass activity in the shape of an economic agitation of peasants, workers and other exploited groups, and use the legislature to further that activity.

Without linking up in some such manner legislative work with an agitation outside, the former becomes utterly sterile and ineffective.

I need not dilate on this point any further. The policy in cases where the Congress is in a minority is not difficult to determine. There are also a number of instances in history to guide us in this regard.

In concluding my remarks on the constitutional issue, I should like to state, as a résumé of what I have said al-

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ready, the underlying principle of our entire policy in the matter of legislative work. We believe that legislatures have to be used only in order to strengthen and support the revolutionary work outside. For us there is no parliamentary work, as such. I remember Mr. Rajagopalachari saying at Jubbulpore, in his speech on our resolution concerning the work of the Congress Party in the Assembly, that when we go to the legislative chamber we must do what is customarily done there. What he meant to say was that we must work there on approved constitutional lines. According to him our insistence, for example, on the slogan of the Constituent Assembly having been raised in the Assembly chamber, was misplaced tactics. That was a slogan which had to be raised outside at the proper time.

Our whole conception of legislative activity is opposed to this. We hold that when we go to the legislatures our purpose should be not only to inflict constitutional defeats on the Government, but also to raise fundamental slogans for the purposes of propaganda, to relate the work within to the day-to-day struggles of the masses outside, to expose Imperialism to obstruct its working. This, of course, means that the Congress while sending its members into the legislature must simultaneously engage itself in organizing the grievances of the masses outside. A strong labour and peasant movement outside coupled with revolutionary use of legislatures—that is the principle which ought to govern the constitutional policy of any fighting organisation like the Congress. Its details will depend on leadership, but its principles are there.

THE TASK OF THE PARTY

I do not know if I have bored you. You doubtless expected me to speak about Socialism. As members of the Congress Socialist Party, I wish you to remember, however, that the most important role that we have to play at present is in connection with the freedom movement. It

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was for this reason that I have examined at length certain problems which happen to be of great immediate importance to that movement. I shall devote the rest of the time I have, to a few remarks regarding our party and its policy and work.

You know, the first and main task of the party is to develop the anti-imperialist movement. There are two aspects of this task, both of which I wish to consider with you. The first relates to our work with the Congress and the other to our work among the masses. The two spheres of work are complementary.

Our work within the Congress is governed by the policy of developing it into a true anti-imperialist body. It is not our purpose, as sometimes it has been misunderstood to be, to convert the whole Congress into a full-fledged socialist party. All we seek to do is so to change the content and policy of that organization that it comes truly to represent the masses, having the object of emancipating them both from the foreign power and the native system of exploitation.

There are some who ridicule this whole idea. Their view is that the Congress is a bourgeois body with absolutely no chance of being influenced in the direction I have indicated. We do not subscribe to this view. The Congress at present is dominated by upper class interests and its leaders are uncompromisingly opposed to admitting into its objective any programme aimed at the economic emancipation of the masses. Yet, within the Congress there is a very large body of opinion which would welcome such a programme. Only, this body which had worked under the old leadership has to be convinced that the programme we advocate will not weaken the national struggle by dividing, as they have learnt to think, the nationalist forces. If we seek to influence them—and without influencing them no group of pure and brilliant theorists can develop an anti-imperialist movement in this country—it is not sufficient to abuse the leadership or to produce learned theses. What

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is needed is a demonstration in actual practice that our programme is more dynamic and effective. I will take up this point more fully when I come to the second part of our task.

So if within the Congress there is a very large anti-imperialist body—I believe numerically it is a majority body—is it not imperative for a party like ours to work actively within that organization? And, with what object and tactics are we to work? Not to disrupt the Congress, not by denouncing the Congress. We should work rather with the object of bringing the anti-imperialist elements under our ideological influence through propaganda and work among the masses, so that finally they come to accept a proper anti-imperialist programme. I am not saying that by working in this manner we shall win the right wing to our programme and thus “convert” the Congress. The Congress as it is constituted at present cannot hold together very long. The more successful we are in pushing our programme, the nearer the day when a split will occur in it. The right wing will doubtless say that we are disrupting the Congress. But, in reality, it will be a ripening consolidation of anti-imperialist forces. The Congress has faced such splits before and has come out stronger each time. Another split would take it to another, and I expect, the last stage of its anti-imperialist existence.

There is another direction in which we must develop the Congress. This concerns its internal organization and constitution. The basis of individual membership on which the Congress is at present organised is very unsatisfactory. It becomes an artificial body, representative not of the masses, but of a handful of members. We must endeavour to change this constitution in such a manner as to make the Congress a direct representative of the people. In my view this can best be done by developing a system of group representation. Members who constitute a primary committee of the Congress should be representatives of class and group organizations. They should represent tenants,

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farmers, labourers, merchants, the professions and so on. The actual details of this plan may be difficult to draw up, but the principle is simple enough, and, to my mind, most just and proper.

It should be obvious that such a constitution would remain a paper document till the class and group organisations are actually brought into existence. The demand for such a constitution would therefore remain unreal and unheeded till this is done. It must, therefore, be accompanied by the creation of these organisations.

Lest I should be misunderstood, I wish to make it clear that I do not for one moment flatter myself into believing that we are, or shall be, the only political group working towards this consummation—I mean the development of an anti-imperialist movement. There are various other socialist groups following different methods and tactics, but basically working for the same end. It is sad to reflect that all of us are not able to work together, but I have no doubt that the efforts of the other groups will have an undoubted share in the ultimate result. Only, if a common line of work was agreed upon, we would be more successful.

I must add that I naturally feel that the line that the Congress Socialist Party has been following is the most correct of all the tactics that are being used, and that, having an organic relation with the Congress movement, our efforts are bound to be more fruitful. Had not the radical elements left the Congress in 1929, just on the eve of the great national upheaval of 1930, the radicalisation of the Congress would have gone much further and we would have been much nearer our goal today.

This process of development of the anti-imperialist forces that I have mentioned just now, cannot be brought about, as I have already said, by mere ideological propaganda. We must at the same time work among the masses. After all, the anti-imperialist movement will consist not only of ideologues, but of workers, peasants, the impover-

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ished middle-classes. To work among these classes, to develop their political consciousness, to organise their economic struggle—this is our main and fundamental task. I must admit that we have not been able to make the desirable headway in this direction. However, the nucleus of work has been formed in many provinces. In the labour movement, our task is not so difficult, because there we have only to join hands with other radical groups and strengthen the dynamic labour movement. But in the sphere of peasant work, we have to do pioneering work in most of the provinces. Here in Bengal there has been a certain amount of economic agitation among the peasants and a nucleus might already exist. If it does, your task is made somewhat easier.

In Bengal, you have almost a limitless field for activity. Both the peasantry and the working class offer ideal spheres of work. Perhaps nowhere in India is the plight of the peasants so pitiable as here and perhaps nowhere are the class issues so distinct. The Bengal Congress movement is greatly dominated by zamindari interests. It is the top-layer, however, which reflects those interests. The rank and file and the lower strata of leadership are, I have no doubt, opposed to them. But, because they lack a programme and an ideology, they have willy-nilly to follow the present leadership.

It will be the task of the Bengal Party to offer the required programme and ideology. If it does so, I have no doubt that it will soon gather around it the great majority of Congress workers of the province and thus pull the Congress movement out of the rut of inaction.

• In my talks with village Congress workers—genuine men with fullest sympathy with our ideals—I have found it difficult to explain to them one programme of work among the peasantry. The question I have found most difficult to drive home is how an economic agitation which is naturally aimed immediately against indigenous vested interests can become a force against imperialism. The

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answer, of course, is that the masses are not directly concerned with imperialism—I am using the term here merely in the sense of the foreign power. What they are faced with is a system of economic exploitation which is daily grinding them to poverty. If they, in their millions, will fight any thing, it is this system of exploitation. But this system is an integral part of imperialism and a fight against it becomes a fight against imperialism itself. This point can be elaborated greatly and all its various aspects discussed; for instance how does it apply to those parts of the country where the zamindari system does not exist. But I need not go into all that here. As far as Bengal is concerned its application is obvious.

To return to the village Congress worker, who I have said has, in most cases, the fullest sympathy with our ideals. It is my experience that it will take something more than an argument, however forceful, to carry conviction with him on this score. He has had no experience with the kind of work we are advocating, though, in provinces like Bihar, Bengal, the U.P., he has ample evidences of class struggle. He has so far worked through *ashrams*, hospitals, khadi centres. He does not know what an economic approach to the peasant is. But I am sure that if we show him the way he will be sure to follow.

I have described to you in brief what the main task of the Party is. Now I wish to tell you as briefly as possible my idea of its development. It is fulfilling today a dialectic need. And as the situation develops and changes we must adjust our policies accordingly. I do not believe, for instance, that we shall remain, or ought to remain, separate from the other socialist forces in the country. That would not be in the interest of the ideals for which we stand. I firmly believe that unless there is a fusion of the forces which I have mentioned, our common objectives will remain unrealised. I shall therefore warn you against sectionalism and futile controversies and exhort you to develop the greatest possible co-operation with the groups

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that are, except for minor differences, working for the same objects as ourselves. I shall take this opportunity to appeal to these also to follow a like policy. I do not ask them to give up criticism, nor do I myself forswear it, but I entreat them to work together in the promotion of identical ideals, keeping in mind the day when we shall all come closer and merge into one organisation. I shall not hazard an opinion at present on the nature of that organization, nor indeed there is an occasion for it now.

Now, I wish to take your leave. In concluding, I shall only say that I am fully alive to the difficulties which you have to face in your work in this province. Please remember, however, that we cannot expect the other party to make things easy for us. If our methods are elastic we should be able to work under any conditions.

I thank you all for giving me your willing attention and hope you will excuse me for having taken so much of your time.

3

Gandhiji's Leadership and the C.S.P. (1940)

THE policy that the Congress Socialist Party has followed in recent months with regard to the Congress has come in for a good deal of criticism and abuse. I believe, however, that a little dispassionate thinking would show the correctness of this policy. Unfortunately, the prevailing atmosphere is not too conducive to dispassionate thought. There is mutual distrust and ill-will, deliberate confusion of issues, empty heroics. In certain quarters it is the fashion to attribute motives to whoever disagrees with you. Thus, it has been suggested by some of my leftist friends that my recent policies have been dictated by my desire to be elevated to the Congress Working Committee. This way of political understanding throws some light on the depths to which a section of the left movement has descended. If my friends find such a motive behind my policies, it is little wonder that in every move of the Congress Working Committee they sense a deal with imperialism.

It is in public interest to refer—even at the risk of indecorum—to a personal matter. Since my membership of the Congress Working Committee is on the brain of some of my friends, I should like to tell them that the doors of the Working Committee have, since the time we were first appointed on it, been always open to me and to some other leading members of the C.S.P. I resigned my membership in 1936 of my own accord, and since have refused my seat every time it has been offered to me. At the Hari-pura Congress Acharya Narendradeva and Achyut Patwardhan refused their seats that were offered again by the then President, Babu Subhas Chandra Bose. At Calcutta, Dr. Rajendra Prasad again invited us to serve on

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the Committee, which offer he repeated at Bombay; but Narendradevji again declined the offer on behalf of the today.

I should add that our refusal of membership never implied any disrespect to the Congress Working Committee, to be a member of which is a great national honour. Nor did it imply our deviation from the principle of composite leadership which we have always held as we hold it even today.

To turn now to the subject-matter. Our present policy has been attacked on the ground that it is a surrender to Gandhism. Socialism *vs.* Gandhism is not the present issue, however. We are faced with the task of preparing for and launching a national struggle against imperialism. This is not a Socialist but a nationalist task to be carried out by socialists, Gandhians and others. Our only crime, therefore, is that we continue to insist on the unity of the Congress as the only guarantee of national unity and a national struggle. Our further crime is that we insist that unity of the Congress involves the unity of its leadership, because we cannot, particularly in such a crisis as the present, split the leadership and keep the Congress together. Our still further crime is that we are being guided not by what is good for the Congress Socialist Party or for that heterogeneous and vague thing called the left, but by what is good for the whole the left and right together. We believe that we have reached a dangerous point when the certain sections of the Left have begun to look upon themselves not as a wing of a body, but as a whole body itself, with interests distinct and separate from the body of which it is a part.

The Congress Socialist Party was formed not to develop into a rival to the Congress, but to work within the Congress, to strengthen it, to mould and shape its policies. In the five years that the Party has functioned, it has succeeded appreciably in influencing Congress policy, number of Congress decisions bear clearly the impress of our pro-

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paganda. Due to the pioneering work of the Party, since the depressing days of 1934, when Civil Disobedience had to be called off and all through the upsurge of parliamentarianism, a vigorous left wing developed in the Congress which even penetrated the ranks of the leadership. The Programme of peasant organization which we placed before the Congress, though unaccepted officially by it, yet won the approval of quite a number of provincial and other Committees and a large number of Congressmen. But in spite of all our efforts the Official programme of the Congress is still Gandhiji's programme of 1920. Also, while a new leadership has arisen, the predominant leadership is still in the hands of the Old Guard. The old leaders have been at the helm for thirty years. During this period they have brought new life, new strength, new consciousness to the masses. They represent a vital national force—still the most influential in the country.

In these circumstances, what are we to do, particularly when a world crisis demands immediate action? Conceivably, given another five years, the balance of influence within the Congress and the country could have been changed and the old, as always, would have given place to the new. I should interpolate a remark here that even today the influence of the left leadership would have been much greater had Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose followed the advice of our Party and had the communists and other leftists the guts to tender the same advice to him. We advised Subhas Babu, in spite of all that had happened, not to resign from the Presidentship of the Congress. Had he followed our advice we would not only have escaped all the sorry developments of the past months, but we would have also had a Working Committee with a large leftists' voice. Subhas Babu himself would have been the President, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru would have been the General Secretary, Sjt. Sarat Chandra Bose and two leftists would have been among the members. It will be remem-

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bered that this was the minimum arrangement to which the old Guard was agreeable.

Let me revert to the question, in the present circumstances what is our duty? To answer it, first let me ask whether we have any other instrument than the Congress for waging a national struggle and maintaining national unity. Throughout history we have had to contend with disintegrating factors and sometimes have even overwhelmed the forces of national unity. Even today excepting the Congress there is no other consolidating factor in our social or political life. The Congress represented and still represents, and from all appearances, will continue to represent (much as the communists may dislike the prospect) the widest, the strongest front against imperialism in India. If India goes to war with imperialism with any chance of success, that war has to be waged under the tricolour flag. People talk loosely of Kisans, mazdoors, youths, and students as if they stand outside of the Congress. What are meant by these generic terms, however, are the Kisan Sabha, the Trade Union Congress, and the Students' Federation. These bodies have potentiality for the future, but at present except in a few provinces, their organisation is elementary. Their role in our national struggle will be important and it must be the task of Socialists as well as of other progressive elements to make that role even more important by strenuous organisational work. Their role is, however, clearly of an auxiliary character. The Congress must lead the struggle and the active co-operation and participation of these bodies will be an added factor of strength. But it is crystal clear that today, neither the Kisan Sabha nor the Trade Union Congress in their present stage of development can hope to fight imperialism with any degree of success. That task unquestionably belongs to the Congress.

This is the situation facing us when looked at through uncoloured glasses. The Congress alone is the country's salvation. And let us remember the Congress means the

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whole and not part of it. A limb torn from a body does not have its proportionate strength and ability. It merely dies.

I have said above that we are faced today with preparing for and launching a national struggle. I have shown that this struggle can be launched by the Congress alone. Now, let us examine another set of facts. The effective leadership of the Congress is in the hands of Gandhiji. It is obvious that if the Congress starts a struggle today it would be in accordance with the programme that Gandhiji lays down. We can influence that programme but we cannot determine it. The technique of the struggle would therefore naturally be the old Gandhian technique, whether any one likes it or not.

An acceptance of these facts does not mean surrender to Gandhism. We have not ceased to propagate socialism. We have not stopped working in the Kisan Sabhas and Trade Unions and developing the peasant and labour movements. The first strike for a War-bonus was led by the C.S.P. in the Gaya Cotton Textile Mill and the first War-bonus victory was won by the Dalmianagar workers under the C.S.P.'s leadership. In Bihar, the U.P., Bombay, Bengal and elsewhere members of the Party have been as active as before in the struggles of the workers. The same is true of the peasant movement. Where worker has suffered in these spheres it has been due to the withdrawal of Party cadres into the new activities of preparation for the national struggle—such as intensive organisation of the Congress Committees and intensive propaganda, volunteer organisation, etc.

However, the situation in which we find ourselves is not such that can expect to develop the national struggle out of our own plan of action. We carry on our own work and propagate our plea, but we at the same time desire an immediate struggle. When we know that there is no prospect of a struggle being started under any other leadership, but the present, is it not the madness to attack the

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leadership, to seek to discredit it, to weaken it? Shall we thereby bring the struggle nearer or push it away?

All these years we have heard the theories of united leadership and united front propounded. Now, when the hour has arrived to put these theories into practice, to act up to them, gutless revolutionaries are scurrying away from their implications. United leadership was held to be necessary in the interest of a united national struggle. This theory was mouthed incessantly by our Communist friends at a time when the Congress was engaged in parliamentary work and struggle seemed distant. Now when the parliamentary work has been given up and the Congress is on the eve of struggle our Communist theorists have thought it wise to fling their theory to the wind and concentrate on attacking the present leadership. In this manner they shall only contribute to the sabotaging of the struggle.

I think it is necessary for us to realise the limitations in which we have to work. By disregarding them we only strengthen them. A fight against the present leadership now is not only inadvisable, it is positively harmful. If a national struggle as opposed to sectional, factional or partial can be launched by Mahatma Gandhi alone, it is suicidal to fight him. It is necessary to lend him our fullest co-operation and loyalty in everything that is preparatory for struggle. We must submit to his condition. If, then, there is no struggle we may part company with him and then take the responsibility of the struggle ourselves if we have the strength.

Many people believe that in these circumstances, the Congress Socialist Party becomes superfluous. I should like to remind friends that we are to be guided by what is good for the whole movement and not by the necessity of blowing our own trumpet at all times. If our policy is correct the C.S.P. will draw strength from it and as in 1934 again show that of all the groups mouthing Marxism, it is the only one which understands how to apply Marx-

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ism to India. This is not the place to go into the matter here, but it would be interesting to show how at every critical stage in the last five years the Congress Socialist Party showed the way and others followed or proved their folly. In 1934 the wise communists went out of the Congress and were out to destroy it. We were in it and in to build and strengthen it. In 1936 they too filed in, to build or to destroy, history alone will show. In 1936 the C. S. P. opposed the acceptance of ministerial offices by the Congress. The Communists were first for accepting them with a radical programme. Later when they found that the Anti-Ministry cry was becoming popular in the Congress Left, they veered round to it as that they may not be isolated. During the General Elections, the C.S.P. supported the Congress wholeheartedly. The Communists opposed the Congress in one constituency only to show their own importance and to blow their own little trumpet. At Tripuri, they spoke passionately of unity and united leadership but again their fear of isolation drove them to action which could lead only to contrary results. At Calcutta, the C.S.P. boldly advised Sjt. Subhas Chandra Bose to withdraw his resignation from the Presidentship; the Communists lost their guts and kept mum. Coming to recent events, the C.S.P. did not subscribe to the addendum to the Independence Pledge; the Communists swallowed it. One hopes that they are faithfully carrying out their vow, otherwise there is danger that fraud may be discovered and Mahatma Gandhi may refuse to launch the struggle after all!! The C.S.P. supported Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the Congress Presidential election, the Communists were neutral. Comrade P. C. Joshi declared in a public statement that voting for Maulana Azad would mean supporting the policy of the Working Committee. Strange argument! When the Communists voted for Roosevelt in America, did it mean that they supported the whole of Roosevelt's policy? In such a thing as a presidential contest one votes for the candidate whose election would ad-

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vance the nation's cause generally. If one must have a President with whose policies one must always be in agreement, one has only one course open, i.e., to set up a candidate every time from one's own Party or Group. There are thousand and one ways of expressing one's difference from the Working Committee and this both the C.S.P. and the Communists have been doing. Voting for Maulana Azad could never have prevented Comrade Joshi from pointing out his difference from the Working Committee. I agree that it would have prevented him from calling Maulana Azad an agent of imperialism! Then a last instance. The C.S.P. clearly dissociated itself from the anti-compromise conference, the Communists were neutral to it. Their growing neutrality is an index of their growing political impotency.

I had not intended to devote so much space to this matter. The list can be enlarged, more so when we leave the realm of policies and enter into that of tactics.

To return to my point. Far from becoming superfluous, the Congress Socialist Party has to be in the forefront of the struggle and the preparations for it. It must remain, as it has been so far, the active element in the Congress Committee, guiding them in organisational and agitational work. It must by carrying on its mass work continue to prepare that basis for struggle that is important than anything else. It must influence Congress policy by criticism and propaganda as it has done so far. The time has come for the Congress Socialist Party to work out what it has preached so far.

4

Whither Congress?: A Picture of Swaraj (1940)

[Commending Jayaprakash's picture Acharya Narendra Deva in a note says:

India is reaching out silently but surely towards a new social order. Through its resolutions, from time to time, the Congress has been giving indications of the shape of things to come. Among them the most outstanding has been known as the Fundamental Rights Resolution of the Karachi Congress. For sometime past, it has been widely felt that it was necessary to get a clearer outline of the picture of India to be. It fell to Comrade Jaiprakash Narayan to make this attempt. The result is embodied in this pamphlet. He has been able to secure a valuable declaration from Gandhiji. It is true that the Congress is not yet committed to the programme embodied in it. We have to go on pressing for it. But this declaration has a value all its own and it is necessary to address the country on the necessity and the contents of such a declaration. —Editor].

WHERE are we going? Where do we want to go? These questions are not idle questions of merely debating, academic or non-practical value. On their answer, indeed, depends the future of our country and of the millions of the humble people whom every Congressman claims to represent.

The Constituent Assembly is no longer a dream of the future. It is the next political step in our march towards freedom and progress. The demand for it has reference not to some distant date at which most of us do not expect to be living, but to the immediate present about the disposition of which every one of us wishes to have a say.

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And what will the Constituent Assembly do? It will endeavour to answer precisely those very questions with which we have started. It will lay down the principles on which a free Indian society shall be reared; it will fashion the foundations of the liberty, prosperity and happiness of the future generations.

ACTORS ON THE STAGE

But who will be the actors on the stage of the Constituent Assembly? We believe, and rightly so, that the Congress occupies the first place in the affections of an overwhelmingly large section of the people. Naturally, therefore, it would be the voice of the Congress that, at any rate, would preponderate in the Assembly (except, it should be added, in matters concerning the minorities which shall have the main voice in determining such questions as concern them as minorities). If it be so, and is it possible to disagree with it, should not Congressmen turn their attention to these serious questions and seek their answer? It is not our intention to appeal to the ranks over the heads of the leaders. Our appeal is as much directed to Congress leaders as to the humblest Congress worker.

In seeking to answer these questions here, first, let me state the principles that are already explicitly set forth in the declarations of the Congress. The first and foremost of these is, of course, the principle of complete independence. It is the creed of the Congress, being the first article of its faith.

ECONOMIC FREEDOM

Beyond the basic principle, there are certain others that are explicitly stated. The second great principle is that of economic freedom. The Swaraj that the Congress wishes to fashion (see the famous Karachi Declaration of Rights) is conceived above all as a Swaraj for the masses. This Swaraj, it is stated, has no reality unless economic

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freedom is added to political freedom. But, beyond the clear enunciation of the goal of economic freedom there is little light shed on the means of securing such freedom. Yet, it is necessary to keep in mind the indubitable aim of economic freedom explicitly enunciated by the Congress—an aim that is second in importance only to the aim of political freedom. We will return later to a consideration of economic freedom.

Among other great principles enunciated by the Congress are complete freedom of conscience, full protection of the rights, faiths and cultures of the minority peoples, absence of all racial or sex discrimination, peace between nations and peaceful means to settle all social disputes. The list is not exhausting nor mention has been made of many noble principles that are implicit in the position of the Congress.

These are great principles and they have rightly raised the Congress in the estimation of the people of India and the world. But they are not enough, or not clearly enough stated, to enable the people of this country to choose their future path and to avoid the fatal dangers in the way.

Let me come directly to the point. It would be trite to say that the basic problem of India is poverty. Yet, that is the profoundest truth of our social life, challenging our utmost wisdom and resource. The Congress is deeply conscious of this problem and it is out of that consciousness that the idea of economic freedom has grown. The difficulty, however, is that no concrete shape has been given to this freedom. As a vague generalisation it is more than useless, nay, it is dangerous. Because, on the one hand, it might lull the poor people with the faith that Congress will end their poverty, and, on the other, it might fail on account of its vagueness (as it is bound to) to solve the actual problem. Hard-headed, clear, concrete measures and not slushy sentimentality would be necessary to tackle the question. What may these hard-headed, concrete measures be?

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FIXED NOTIONS

The first difficulty we encounter in our search for economic salvation is our fixed, performed notions that have unconsciously laid hold of our thinking. We are living in a capitalist age and we have been closely associated, through its language, educational system, juridical, political and economic institutions, with the classic capitalist country of the world—England. The ideas and thoughts of capitalist England and also generally of capitalist Europe and America, have seeped into the very pores of our thinking till they have begun to appear to be as sound and unalterable as the laws of nature. In other words, without any conscious attempt, we have imbibed capitalist ideals and have come to look upon capitalist institutions as embodying eternal truths of social organisations.

The result of this unconscious conditioning of our social thought is that whenever we seek to reconstruct our own society, all our plans run into capitalist moulds and we find ourselves reproducing the well-known institutions of capitalism. The attitude of the Congress ministries towards large-scale industry is an instance in point. In considering labour legislation, wages, price of sugar-cane and other similar matters, the ministries were over-anxious about the "flight" of capital from their provinces. They felt compelled to give encouragement to capitalist industrial enterprises. Within the limits of their social thinking it was not unnatural for them to do so. But, this only proves our case anew.

CAPITALIST INFLUENCE

It requires no effort to show what should happen if we were to approach the task of national reconstruction with the kind of outlook described above. Capitalist industry, capitalist finance, capitalist commerce would rapidly develop and take firm grip over the economic and political life of the country. The next thing we would find after that would be that poverty was still prevalent, unemployment

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still rampant, the violence of capitalist exploitation fully functioning. No one should have any difficulty in coming to the conclusion that such would be the state of affairs. For, we live in a curious paradoxical mental state. On the one hand, while we are a prey to capitalist modes of thought, on the other, the present collapse of capitalist civilization has exposed to us the ineffectualness, the brutality, the misery of capitalism. Thus while we hug the thought-complexes of capitalism, we also clearly see its hollowness and futility. We cannot help seeing them, unless we are blind, for they are writ large across the very face of capitalism. Therefore, in our unthinking drift towards national reconstruction we are heading straight to a terrible social abyss.

There is another circumstance which multiplies the danger towards which we are drifting. Among Congressmen while the larger section is an unconscious prey to capitalist ideals of social organisation, there is not an inconsiderable number of Congressmen who hold those ideals consciously, because they are personally interested in the industries, banks, insurance companies, in short, in all manner of capitalist undertakings and in their profits. The main interest of these Congressmen in Swaraj is that it would free native capital from the bondage of British Capital and thus enable it to foliate in all its magnificence. The leading cadres of the Congress are recruited from the educated middle class. Now, the chief characteristic of this class is that its dominating outlook is that of a social climber. The middle class man desires nothing more than to lift himself to the level of higher classes. Therefore, the pull of these classes towards the profits of capitalism would be a potent driving force towards the abyss of which we have spoken. We have therefore to be doubly vigilant.

MENTAL TWISTS

In discussing this matter with Congressmen one comes across all kinds of mental twists which, no doubt, give them the sense of security for the future and make them

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complacent. One of these mental outfits is that the ship of state would succeed in avoiding all dangers because it would be captained by men possessing the highest ideals of social justice and of the common good. Such men would surely avoid the dangers of capitalism by keeping it in check and "holding the balance" between all classes.

Those who seek solace in such thoughts hardly appreciate the nature of the problem before us. The problem is not to eradicate or bring under control this or that evil in society, but to determine the very basis and character of society. Politics are the expression of economic issues. The national parliament and the national government as soon as they come into existence, will be faced with such questions as taxation, tariffs, currency, exchange and banking, the public debt, railway freights, foreign and internal commerce, regulation of wages, hours, agrarian matters, industrial matters, etc. These questions admit of no temporising. They require immediate, straight, clear-cut answers. Idealist captains of the ship of state in answering these would be laying the foundations of Indian society. One type of answer would lay the basis of a capitalist society, another type of another kind of society. They will not be called upon to hold the balance between the classes, but to decide which classes would rule. If their basic economic-policies (in answering the above questions) are such as to give scope to capitalism to develop, they will be caught in the grip of the laws of capitalism which are inexorable and which will take them step by step to a goal which might not have been before their eyes at the beginning.

Once the course towards capitalism has been fixed it will be not so much a question of "controlling" capitalism, but of developing and protecting it, that is, of being controlled by it. In fact, the interest of the whole nation would soon appear to have become bound up with capitalism itself. If the capitalist system suffers, wages fall, unemployment shoots up, agriculture declines. In short, successors of

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the idealist captains of the ship of state would be reduced to nothing more than the highest executives of the capitalist class seeking to bend all national energies into the service of that class. The efforts of the class-conscious Congressmen, mentioned earlier, would hasten this process. Furthermore, the rise of corruption, the swarming up of job-hunters and office-hunters within the Congress will hasten this process. A glimpse of this development (in a lower key) could be had during the days when the Congress ministries were in office.

The question may be asked why should only the capitalists be able to capture the machine and not the masses? We are not suggesting that they would do so in every case. We are pointing out the danger that is inherent in current mode of thought and making an appeal for clear thinking on these issues. The problem may be restated thus. The masses will capture political power; but how will they retain that power and use it in their interest and for their prosperity and happiness and progress? We have shown that they will not be able to do so if we on their behalf make a present of this power to the capitalist class, as we surely would do if we nurtured it and developed its economic power.

UPPER CLASSES

Before proceeding with this analysis it is necessary to point out that in supposing that the success of the Congress would mean the success of the masses, we are idealising the situation and taking it at its best. In actuality it will not be such an unalloyed victory of the masses. We have shown that there is a considerable section in the Congress which represents materially, or in spirit, the interests of the upper class. These Congressmen due to their social position, education, etc., are nearer the top of the Congress than the bottom and therefore, they influence its policies to an extent out of all proportion to their numbers. Therefore the success of the Congress will also largely be

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the success of the upper classes. We have to decide who would be successful in the next contest that will ensue; the masses or the classes?

There is another complacent solution of the difficulty we have raised. India being preponderatingly an agrarian country and most of us having our roots in the primitive village, it is natural that many of us call up to our minds an idyllic picture of village civilization. The self-sufficient village with its crafts is the answer of these people to the problems of poverty and capitalism. Unfortunately, there is little clear thinking on this question, and most people use the argument without conviction in political thinking. Let us admit without any ado that the village crafts should be revived and the economy of the village set upon its legs. Even after that is admitted a good chunk, the larger chunk to our mind, of the problem still remains unsolved. No sane man can deny that a modern state cannot be organised on a handicraft basis alone. It has to have large-scale machine production in many spheres in order to provide a decent standard of living to its citizens, modern amenities of life, security and the means of progress.

STATE-OWNERSHIP

No one has given more serious thought to the economic organisation of the country from the point of view of the village and the elimination of poverty and exploitation than Professor J. C. Kumarappa, Secretary of the All-India Village Industries' Association. After much thought, Professor Kumarappa reached the conclusion that industries could be divided into two classes: One, those which in their very nature can be carried on in a decentralised manner; two, those which in their very nature must be centralised. Among the latter mentioned are iron and steel, mining, transport (railway, shipping and motoring,) electricity, aviation, defence, machine manufacture, etc.

Thus it should be clearly understood by our agrarian politicians that their idyllic picture of rural life must be considerably overlaid by a good bit of industrialisation

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and urbanisation. The question remains, what shall be done with the large-scale industries that must remain or be created? Who shall own them and who shall run them? Private individuals driven by the quest of profits or the people in the quest of an ample life? Professor Kuma-rappa, it gives us pleasure to state, has no hesitation in answering that the people, that is the state should own them and run them in their own interest. The reason why he comes to this conclusion is not far to seek. If the necessary large-scale industries are left in capitalist hands, not only would exploitation and poverty remain in those spheres, but the capitalists would grow in power and would soon destroy the handicrafts and capture the balance of power.

VILLAGE ECONOMY

In passing it may be added that the ideal of a wholly self-sufficient village economy, apart from its impracticability, is not a desirable basis of political organisation as it is the mother of fissiparous political life. The political disunity of India throughout history, in spite of a remarkable cultural unity has been due in the main to the self-sufficiency of the villages. A nation to be united and to be enduring must bind the remotest village in a common political, economic and cultural life.

Now we come to the third solution of the questions we have raised. It is said that truth and non-violence will solve everything. Let us admit for the sake of argument, that they will do so, but yet it is necessary to ask in what measure? Truth and non-violence are not *mantras* that their chanting would work miracles. They are a social methodology. The question how non-violence would solve the problem of poverty is not answered by saying that non-violence would solve it. Yet, this is the manner in which the question is answered by those who mouth non-violence but do not understand it. Whenever the question of the abolition of the Zemindari system, or of capitalism is raised, we are solemnly reminded that it is against

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non-violence to talk of abolition. We are told that landlords and capitalists may live side by side with tenants and workers and that both the rich and poor may live happily. Such talk, we regret to have to say, is indulged in only by those who either wish to exploit Gandhism or wish to avoid the pain of thinking.

GANDHIJI'S ATTITUDE

We have given the views of Professor Kumarappa, who may be considered to be an expert on these matters from the point of view of Gandhism. The views of Gandhiji himself about them are no less clear. Gandhiji rejects capitalism. He believes in social property. He believes in the elimination of private profit from large-scale industry and in its social ownership. Perhaps the clearest expression of his views regarding these questions is contained in his recent note on the draft resolution of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan enunciating basic political, social and economic principles of a free India. We shall request the readers to turn to that note and ponder over its importance. Gandhiji has put the seal of his approval over far-reaching economic measures, such as socialisation of transport, shipping, mining, heavy industries, abolition of all forms of landlordism and resettlement of land so that no peasant has more land than he requires for a decent living. Gandhians make a virtue of the fact that they are blind followers of Gandhiji. Will they accept these views as expressed in Shri Jayaprakash's resolution and endorsed by Gandhiji? If they do, a new chapter may open up in the history of the Congress.

SOCIALISTIC BASIS

Many people who may be opposed to Shri Jayaprakash's socialistic programme may take shelter behind Gandhiji's caution against haste in carrying it out. But, before we begin to quarrel about the speed of executing a programme, let us first agree about the programme itself. Regarding the speed, there is not much that has to be said. It is rather

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difficult to persuade people to concur in the disappearance of their economic privileges and profits. Nor, is it always possible to secure their concurrence before action is taken. It is necessary to remember that we are considering these questions in the context of Congress assuming state power. We have pointed out above that immediately after taking the reins of government, the Congress will be faced with basic tasks of reconstruction. They will have to be immediately tackled and while harmful haste might be avoided the foundation-stones must be laid forthwith, otherwise no structure would rise. No one can construct without foundations. The opposition of vested interests cannot delay our action, nor the latter be made to wait upon their pleasure. It is very doubtful that we would ever succeed in winning them over. Let us take the experience of the ministries. Did the Bombay ministry give up prohibition in Bombay because of the opposition of the interests affected? Should the ministry have waited till it had converted at least a majority of the liquor dealers to its side? No believer in non-violence would answer in the affirmative. Again, should the Madras ministry have waited till it had got the money-lending interests to its side before enacting its debt legislation? Should the U.P. ministry have dropped the tenancy legislation because the taluqdars vehemently opposed it? Should the Bihar ministry have not levied income-tax on agricultural incomes because the big landlords opposed it? These instances show that a government must carry out the mandate it has received from the people and disregard the opposition of the interests adversely affected. Can there be any doubt that the Congress will get an overwhelming mandate from the Indian people in favour of the programme that Shri Jayaprakash has proposed or any similar programme? If the Congress then fails to carry out that mandate, it would be guilty of having betrayed the people.

To-day when we stand on the threshold of the Constituent Assembly, it is our duty to tell the people where we

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are going and where we wish them to accompany us. It is likely that before the final decision to launch civil disobedience is taken, the A.I.C.C. shall be called. That will be opportune occasion for a declaration of our aims and objectives. The suggestions that Shri Jayaprakash has made may serve as a basis for such a declaration now that they have received the general approval of Gandhiji. Will the great leaders of the Congress who are proud of being guided by Gandhiji give heed to his guidance in this matter too?

[For Gandhiji's comments on this see Appendix page 241].

V

*THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIALIST UNITY
IN INDIA*

THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIALIST UNITY IN INDIA

[In the course of his Foreword to the first publication of this on 20th April, 1941 Com. Purshottam Trikamdas wrote:

"In his inimitable and lucid style Jayaprakash gives us the history of the attempt made by our party to achieve socialist unity and the reasons for its failure. With characteristic charity and restraint, Jayaprakash has understated the case and, in places, has taken upon himself the responsibility for the policy adopted which really was, that of the Party Executive."

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"We are not sorry that the experiment was made; but because of the harrowing experience we had to pass through we are not sorry that it has ended. The inclusion of the Communists only resulted in endless discussions and we had to bear silently the fractionist and disruptive tactics going on under our very eyes. However that may be, the experiment has certainly resulted in one good thing. Hereafter there will be no hankering left in our hearts that might have been had the experiment not been made, and we shall at last, albeit after the waste of a few precious years, settle down to carry on the great work of the Party lying ahead of us. It was a bad dream, a nightmare; let us forget it and get on with the task."]

THE last half-a-dozen years, that is, the years since the end of the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1934, saw a phenomenal rise of the socialist movement in this country. The history of this rise is largely the history of the Congress Socialist Party.

Before the Party was formed in 1934, soon after the cessation of civil disobedience, socialism could hardly be said

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to have been in the picture of Indian politics. It had received a certain amount of publicity at the time of the Meerut Conspiracy Case; but it secured no place for itself in the political life of the country, and appeared to the people rather as an article of foreign importation. In 1931, Shri M. N. Roy, when he returned to India secretly, formed a party of his own. But that party too remained practically unknown, and did not as much as create even a little ripple over the surface of Indian politics. The utterances of individual radical nationalist leaders like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Shri Subhas Chandra Bose, had attracted to a degree the attention of a section of the middle class intelligentsia. But there was no organized movement worth the name. It would be no exaggeration, therefore, to say that it was the Congress Socialist Party that in 1934 put Socialism on the political map, and in the six years of its life, continuously enlarged the orbit of its influence.

These last six years of the socialist movement have been as full of rich experience as they were full of difficulties. We shall deal here only with one of the many problems that faced it. No question was of more interest or greater importance to the socialist movement than what might be described as the question of "socialist unity". Today, nothing is of greater importance than to examine the experiences gained regarding this problem, and to draw lessons for future guidance. While the matter is of some interest to the general public also, it is of the utmost importance for members of the Congress Socialist Party. Not only has all the relevant material never been published before but there is also a persistent attempt by enemies of the Party to misrepresent the whole case. It is hoped, therefore, that this pamphlet would be of considerable use to members of the Party and its friends, and serve not only to inform but also to guide them. At the same time it is our hope that it will be found to be of some service also to the public in general.

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The phrase 'socialist unity' is at best a vague phrase. Does it mean the unity of all those who call themselves Socialists? And what is the meaning of unity? Co-operation, unity of aim and purpose, or unity of organization? There are all manners of people who claim to be socialists. There are people among the Liberals who profess socialism. Gandhiji calls himself a socialist. There are others, like the Congress Socialist Party, who consider that the only true socialism is Marxism. The problem that we are considering here is the problem of the coming together in one party of all those groups and individuals who stand by Marxism.

Let us consider how this question presented itself concretely when the Party was formed. Then we shall consider the vicissitudes through which it had to pass and its present position.

At the time the Party was formed, there were two other socialist groups that professed Marxism, and aspired to have an all-India basis. These were the Communist Party and the Roy Group. There were also at that time or shortly afterwards certain local Marxist groups, such as the Punjab Socialist Party and the Labour Party (Bengal). From the very beginning the Party desired to bring together all these local and national groups in order to form one united socialist party. As would appear from the present position, the Party largely failed in this endeavour. It failed, however, not because it lacked initiative or spared effort, but because of the sectarianism and disruptiveness of the other parties, particularly of the Communist Party. We shall now turn to the history of this failure.

THE ROY GROUP

We shall first deal with the Roy Group. The Group greeted the formation of the Party with enthusiasm. Some of its members were associated with the Party from its foundation, and the Group as a whole took up an attitude

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of goodwill and co-operation. The Party in its turn invited members of the Group to join it. In a few months practically the whole Group was within the Congress Socialist Party, and the hope was aroused that at least two of the three parties were soon to become one. But this was not to be.

Here, we may draw attention to an interesting fact—a fact that would emerge clearly from this narrative as we go along. Our Party, because it grew out of the very heart of the national movement, occupied a very strategic position in it. This led every other party that came along to capture Congress Socialist Party so as to take advantage of the position it occupied. When this was not possible, it was sought to destroy the Congress Socialist Party as an obstacle to the rise of others. This is what happened in the case of the Royists and the Communist Party.

At the time the Roy Group joined the Party, there was hardly any difference expressed with the basic policies of the Party. But within the next year, i.e., sometime before the second conference of the Party at Meerut in January 1936, certain differences began to appear. This difference was set forth in a document that said in essence that the Party should not at all be developed as a socialist party but as the left wing of the Congress; it went further and said that the Congress Socialist Party as a socialist party should indeed be liquidated.

Here again we may draw attention to another interesting fact. The basic difficulty in the path of unity was the ridiculous idea held by every miserable little party that it alone was the real Marxist party, and that every other party had therefore to be exploited, captured or destroyed. The Roy Group was also a votary of this inflated creed. It was natural for it, therefore, to consider the development of another socialist party as unnecessary and harmful. It was much better to have a left platform which it could animate and dominate. All this was unfortunately not clear to us at the beginning, and we took seriously the professions

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of unity of these groups and parties. Indeed, the ideal of unity had so far got the better of our judgment and understanding that this did not become sufficiently clear to some of us till the parties concerned themselves tore off their masks.

When the said Royist document was placed before the National Executive at Meerut, the two Royist members of the Committee repudiated it completely, and supported instead the Thesis of the Party (known as the Meerut Thesis) that stated clearly that the Party was and must remain a Marxist socialist party. When the matter was taken to the Conference, the Royists were divided. Some voted for the Executive's Thesis, a few produced an amendment which made a veiled attempt to revert to the repudiated document. They were completely routed. After that single instance in which a point of important difference was brought to light, the Group worked as if it would soon merge completely with the Party. Difficulties were indeed experienced with them here and there, as in the labour movement in Bombay, but these were not ideological differences.

This situation continued till some time after the release of Shri M. N. Roy from prison towards the end of 1936. To begin with, he was friendly to the Party and even played with the idea of joining it. But soon enough he began in his public statements to make indirect attacks on the Party and its basic policies. Statements such as 'there should be no party within the Congress,' 'abolition of zamindari is a remote issue,' 'there should be no organization of the peasantry apart from the Congress committees' (the Party had taken a leading role in forming Kisan Sabhas and raising the issue of abolition of landlordism) found frequent places in his public utterances. He, however, allowed his followers who had joined the Congress Socialist Party to continue to remain in it. But not for long. Suddenly, at the time of the Delhi Convention in March 1937, he decided secretly to withdraw his

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followers from the Congress Socialist Party. Why he did so was never publicly explained. Perhaps he felt the anomaly of the position in which the leader and his followers found themselves in two different camps. He must have found out that the Congress Socialist Party could not become his tool, nor a convenient pedestal for the eminence he wished to attain. Whatever be the reasons, the fact is that the Royists soon after trooped out of the Congress Socialist Party. While staging their resignations they invariably attacked the Congress Socialist Party for weakening the Congress. After that the main political activity of Shri M. N. Roy and his *Independent India* was to discredit and denounce the Party. They failed to capture it; therefore, they must destroy it.

Thus, after more than a year and a half of close co-operation, our Royist friends left us with a parting kick. The entire responsibility for disrupting the measure of unity that had been achieved must be laid at the doors of the Royists, and above all of Shri Roy. However, judging from the present activities of the Democratic People's Party, it does not appear as though the cause of socialism suffered so very frightfully after all from that parting of ways! Yet, what can be said of Shri Roy cannot perhaps be said of all his followers. Undoubtedly, some of that Group could have served socialism well, had they not been bagged in Royism.

II

THE LABOUR PARTY (BENGAL)—THE PUNJAB SOCIALIST PARTY—THE PUNJAB KIRTI KISAN PARTY

Before taking up the story of our relations with the Communist Party we shall dispose of the two other parties mentioned above.

The Bengal Labour Party started with an attitude of strong hostility towards the Party. The Party on the other

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hand endeavoured from the very beginning to wear down this hostility and persuade the Labour Party to enter into a united front pact. Very soon our efforts were successful, and a joint Board was set up with an equal number of representatives of the Bengal Congress Socialist Party and the Labour Party to co-ordinate the activities of both the parties. Some time later the Labour Party merged with the Communist Party; thereafter our relations with it were the same as with the latter. After some time the Labour Party split away from the Communist Party and once again became an independent party, working in alliance with the Forward Bloc. Our relations with it now, as with the Forward Bloc, are friendly and based on mutual co-operation.

As for the Punjab Socialist Party, which was formed largely out of the old Naujawan Bharat Sabha, the Party was able to achieve complete success with it. The Punjab Socialist Party was from the beginning well-disposed towards the Party, and willing to join it. There were for some time certain ideological obstacles in the way: for instance, the Punjab Party's strong antipathy for the Congress. However, in the course of time these obstacles were removed and the Punjab Socialist Party merged with the Congress Socialist Party.

We might also mention here the Punjab Kirti Kisan Group. Our relations with this group have always been friendly; and at one time a large number of Kirti comrades were members of the Punjab Congress Socialist Party.

III

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA

Let us now turn to our relations with the Communist Party of India. The story of these relations falls into four parts or periods: the first, beginning from the birth of the Party to the Meerut Conference in January 1936; the second, from January 1936 to August 1937; the third, from August

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1937 to the beginning of the European War; the fourth, from the beginning of the War till the present.

The first period was marked by the bitterest hostility on the part of the Communist Party, and by ceaseless attempt at co-operation and unity on that of the Party. It might be added that the Party's attitude remained consistently unchanged throughout. Even today in spite of the renewed hostility and belligerency of the Communist Party our attitude of co-operation as between the two revolutionary parties continues. Only the perspective of unity no longer remains due to the experiences hereinafter described.

As soon as the Party was formed it was faced with malicious and bitter opposition from the Communist Party. It was described as a "left manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie," and as "social fascist"—hackneyed expression of the international communist movement. Not only the Communist Party of India took up this attitude of belligerency; but even its mentors in Britain, such as Mr. Palme Dutt, did likewise. The communist movement throughout the world was at that time following an extremely sectarian policy prescribed by the Sixth Congress of the Third International—a policy aimed at giving a clear-cut identity to the communist parties. This was done everywhere by attacking all other parties that worked in the name of socialism or organised labour. Indeed, the hostility shown to the socialist parties was often greater than that shown to the bourgeois parties. The fruits of this policy were strife and bitterness in the world socialist movement.

In India too, it must have been intolerable to the Communist Party to find an independent socialist party in existence. Immersed in its own narrowness and pettiness, it must have seen its monopoly of Marxism direly threatened: and it girded up its loins to give battle.

How did the Party react to this foolish opposition? It did not counter-attack; it did not return the vituperation; it did not seek to thwart or defeat the Communist Party. It recognized in the Communist Party a sister revolu-

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tionary party, although following at that time a foolish and disastrous policy. In contrast with the Communist Party's policy of hate and strife, it opened up the perspective of a united socialist party, to be evolved by a slow convergence of all socialist streams. To make a beginning it actually proposed to enter into a united front arrangement with the Communist Party. The latter had at that time an open platform in the Red Trade Union Congress--one more of the products of the foolish policy they were following at that time. The Party negotiated with the Red Trade Union Congress and succeeded in persuading it to sign a united front agreement. This was done entirely at the Party's own initiative at a time when the other party was carrying on a bitter campaign against it. There could be no more genuine proof of the Party's earnest desire for socialist unity.

The agreement with the Red Trade Union Congress could not in the very nature of things have gone far. The two parties agreed on joint demonstrations and to "cease fire". Since we were not carrying on any war against Communist Party, the "cease fire" clause had pertinence to the latter alone. As events showed, the Communist Party did not honour even this limited agreement. In its secret propaganda, its attacks on the Party continued; and even at joint public functions it showed little regard for the clause in the agreement that said that no party should utilize a joint function for partisan propaganda. We put all that down to the long sectarian tradition and practice of the Communist Party and hoped for better results in the future.

At this stage it would be advisable to keep in mind the wide differences that existed then between the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party. It should not be supposed that the Party thought an immediate unity with the Communist Party to be possible. The differences were too great for that. But the Party certainly believed that if unity was desirable and was to come in the future,

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it could be possible not by fighting each other but by trying to work together as far as possible. There is no doubt that had the Communist Party worked in the same spirit and really desired unity, there would have been a very different story to tell today.

The Communist Party was then, as it is now, a branch of the Third International. The Congress Socialist Party, on the other hand, was and is an independent organization. More than that: its very birth was in opposition to the line of the International. The Communist Party, following the latter, was outside the Congress and actively opposed to it. It had made attempts to launch organizations in rivalry to the Congress, such as the short-lived Workers' and Peasants' Party and the still-born Anti-imperialist League. In contradiction to this line (which was the line of the Third International) the Party fully supported the Congress and stood for strengthening and developing it further as the instrument of national struggle. The Communist Party considered the Congress a bourgeois organization which communists must shun and fight. The Party looked upon the Congress as a mass national organization, which socialists must enter and develop along their own lines. The third fundamental difference was as regards the trade union movement. The Communist Party had split the movement (again following the dictates of its International) and formed its own miserable Red Trade Union Congress. It is hardly necessary to point out what would become of the trade union movement and workers' solidarity if every little party were to form its own unions. Workers in every industry and every factory would be split up into rival unions fighting among themselves. Yet, even this elementary Marxism was unknown at that time to our communist friends, and if one may venture to suggest, to the Third International too. Here again the policy of the Congress Socialist Party was totally different; and it was truly Marxist Policy. The Party believed firmly in the unity of the trade union movement and from the

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start worked to that end. Till such time as unity was achieved, the Party joined hands with the All-India Trade Union Congress. All unions formed by or under the control of the Party were to be affiliated to the All-India Trade Union Congress. In selecting this Trade Union Congress out of the three organizations that existed, the Party once again showed the quality of its judgment, because it was the All-India Trade Union Congress into which the two other organizations were later to merge. We shall instance one more important difference: it is regarding this very question of socialist unity which we are considering. The Communist Party believed in itself as the only true socialist party with a right to exist, and treated all others as enemies. The Party, on the other hand, stood for immediate co-operation among all the socialist groups and the eventual growth of a united socialist party.

During those days as now, the principal communist line of attack was that we were no socialists and had no understanding of Marxism. It was they who were the true interpreters of Marx and Lenin. It is, therefore, of interest to note here that it was not very long before these self-appointed priests of Marxism were eating all their words and repudiating all the fundamental policies which they had been asserting with such half-educated cocksureness. In less than two years they came running into the Congress, disbanded their red trade unions, joined the All-India Trade Union Congress, and at least in words, accepted the objective of socialist unity. The Marxism of the Congress Socialist Party proved sounder than the parrot-like dogmatism of the Communist Party.

To resume our story. Due to the hostility of the Communist Party, the National Executive had, at the time of the first conference in Bombay, made a rule that no member of the party could be admitted into the Congress Socialist Party. This was a decision forced upon the Executive by the policy of the Communist Party itself. How-

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ever, since the earliest days the Executive was determined to bring about a situation in which this ban would become unnecessary and through a process of infiltration and co-operation the two parties would soon become one. Therefore, the General Secretary of the Party and certain other important members of the Executive kept up during the subsequent months a continuous contact with the leaders of the Communist Party. These contacts were very useful to the Party's point of view. This position continued for a year. In the meanwhile the Seventh Congress of the Third International met in Moscow and decided after eight years to reverse gears. It was, however, some time before the Communist Party of India officially changed its policy regarding the Congress, the Congress Socialist Party or the Trade Union Congress.

In January 1936 the Second Conference of the Party met at Meerut. There acting on the report of the General Secretary, the National Executive unanimously decided to open the doors of the Party to members of the Communist Party subject to its supervision. It should be appreciated that this was entirely an unilateral decision taken at the Party's own initiative. It was based on the belief that important elements in the Communist Party accepted the main ideas of the Party and that by admitting them into the Party, we would be furthering the cause of socialist unity. However, officially, the Communist Party still followed its old policy. And it should be mentioned that at the time when the Congress Socialist Party took such a revolutionary organizational step in the direction of unity, the Communist Party had advanced only to the extent of sending a representative to Meerut to study this "left manoeuvre of the bourgeoisie" and submit a report!

It was not till several months later that the Communist Party on its side decided to grasp the proffered hand of comradeship of the Congress Socialist Party. That was at the time of the Lucknow Congress. That was a moment of great satisfaction to us. We thought that we were well

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on our way towards socialist unity. The Royists were already with us, and we hoped the communists too would now gradually come in, so that very soon, as in the course of joint work differences would wear off and mutual confidence would increase, the united socialist party of India would emerge into being.

It should not be supposed that we were unaware at this stage of the differences that still remained between us and the Communist Party: for instance, the difficulty about international affiliation. We, however, thought that as the movement grew it would be able to solve its problems as they arose, and that there would be no purpose served in trying to solve all possible problems at the start. A mature movement might find means and strength to overcome difficulties entirely beyond the resources of its childhood. Experience has shown that we would have been right in thinking thus only if all the other parties were equally serious and honest about unity.

However, after Meerut a large number of communists joined the Party. It was laid down at Meerut that they would be taken into the Party only with the express permission of the Executive in every case. But, in practice no permission was ever taken. The Executive was aware of this fact, but it did not take a very serious view of it because it did not wish to queer the process of stressing technicalities. This indeed was a great mistake. The communists in this way came into the Party under false pretences, and later when difficulties arose they were able to deny their membership of the Communist Party.

In course of time, as more and more communists entered the Party, disturbing notes began to be heard. During the whole of the latter part of 1936 and latter months, reports kept on reaching the Executive that the communists were doing fraction work within the Party and trying to capture its organizations. There were frequent complaints from Andhra. Outside the Party also the relations between our cadres and those of Communist Party were not

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very happy. Complaints came particularly from Cawnpore, Bombay, Calcutta, i.e., the labour areas. It was reported that the communists were found claiming that they would not permit any other party to entrench itself in the labour movement. One wishes, speaking parenthetically, that they had shown equal anxiety in preventing careerists and reformists from entrenching themselves there. One might go further, without closing the parenthesis, and point out that they have indeed always exhibited a strange adeptness in allying with such elements in the labour movement in order to keep out those socialists who did not belong to their church. Regarding the reports of faction work, the National Executive did no more than warn the Provincial organization to keep an eye on it.

After this situation had dragged on for months, there came in August 1937, a great shock to us which proved to be the turning point in our relations with the Communist Party. With that we reached the end of the second stage of our relations and entered the third. In this instance also, as in the case of the Royists, the initiative towards disruption came from the other side (i.e., the Communist Party in this case). The National Executive was meeting at Patna in August. At this meeting a statement of the Communist Party was read which caused a painful shock and great indignation. The statement was a secret document of the Communist Party and evidently meant only for its members. It said, in brief, that the Congress Socialist Party was not a socialist party, and that the Communist Party would never tolerate a rival party. It went on to say that the Communist Party was the only real socialist party, and that the Congress Socialist Party was to be developed merely into a platform of left unity.

It is necessary for members of the Party to fully appreciate the nature of the Communist Party statement. It set forth clearly the true aims of the Communist Party with regard to the Congress Socialist Party and explained fully all the latter policies of the former. It cannot but be re-

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gretted that the Executive at Patna disregarded the dangers that were thus exposed and, in the pursuit of its idealistic aims, committed an organizational blunder. The statement, in the first place, knocked the whole basis of the Lucknow Agreement between the Congress Socialist Party and the Communist Party. That basis was that both these were socialist parties which in course of time and following certain policies of co-operation would unite to form a single party. Without this basic assumption there could have been no meaning in the slogan of 'socialist unity'. If there was only one socialist party, as the statement pugnaciously asserted, where did the question of unity with *another* socialist party arise? In other words, the statement clearly showed that the Communist Party had not given up its monopolistic and sectarian attitude, and that it had really no faith in socialist unity. That slogan merely served it as a convenient device to enter into relations with the Congress Socialist Party and gain access to the positions it held. The statement clearly admitted as much, when it declared that the Congress Socialist Party was to be developed only as a platform—a platform dominated by the Communist Party. Further, when the statement talked of not tolerating a rival socialist party, it again gave the lie to the Communist Party's professions of unity. In what manner could the question of rivalry arise if both parties truly believed in unity? The statement thus made it clear, firstly, that the Communist Party did not believe in socialist unity, because it recognised no other socialist parties; secondly, that it wanted to destroy the Congress Socialist Party as a socialist party and capture it to be used as its open platform.

All this came as a great shock to the Executive and the indignation was unanimous. There were at that time four "Trojan horses" of the Communist Party on the Congress Socialist Party Executive. They too joined in the indignation (so that they might not give themselves away). Not

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a voice was raised in defence or mitigation of that statement. After a short discussion, the Executive arrived at the unanimous decision that in future no member of the Communist Party should be allowed to enter the Party. That was a mild, and as experience proved, a mistaken decision. Organizational and political considerations required not only a ban on their future entry but also immediate expulsion of the communists, who had already been admitted into the Party. The Executive, however, was eager to avoid doing anything that might make the chances of unity more difficult; and it hoped that the action taken might induce the Communist Party to correct its ways. Also it still hoped that there were important elements in the Communist Party who genuinely stood for unity. This too later proved to be a vain hope.

Thus, the next check to socialist unity after the Royist walk-out came from the Communist Party.

After August 1937, the situation steadily deteriorated, the Party feeling itself increasingly paralysed. For months it felt that there was no alternative to expelling the communists, and yet the Party hesitated to undo all that it had done before and to let go all the hopes it had so fondly cherished. Indeed, when it came to taking action, the Party continued to harbour and accommodate the communists. It was during this period that the General Secretary of the Party, by way of reorganisation, handed over to them the whole of the Andhra Party. This was in due course endorsed by the Executive.

The next landmark of importance in this depressing history is the Lahore Conference of the Party in April, 1938. This Conference reinforced the conclusions to which the Party was being driven. At this time the Communist Party conveyed an astonishing note to the National Executive. It was a sort of comic anti-climax to Patna. The note categorically stated that the Communist Party considered the Congress Socialist Party to be a true revolutionary Marxist party, and believed that socialist unity could be brought

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about only by the unity of the two parties. This was only eight months after Patna. In eight months the Congress Socialist Party from being a left platform had become a revolutionary Marxist party. What progress we must have made to have so impressed the Indian branch of the Third International! No body was, however, taken in by this comic *volte-face* of the Communist Party. The real purpose of the note was obvious to everyone, as it must be to the reader. The fact was that the Communist Party was in fright. Since Patna, feelings against the tactics of the Communist Party had been growing, and a body of opinion was gaining in strength in the Party that the time had come when the communists should be shown the way out. They had too long been allowed, in the name of unity, to take advantage of the Party. The fact that M. R. Masani was Chairman of the Conference added to the fears of the communists. The latter have tried to denounce Masani as a communist-baiter. He, of course, was nothing of the sort. What angered and frightened the communists was his organizational competence and soundness. He disagreed with the communists violently, but was prepared for honest co-operation with them as between two independent parties. But he was the first to see through their game of disruption and capture, played under the cover of unity. He was, therefore, early to demand the wholesale expulsion of the communists from the Party, not as an anti-communist measure, but as a counter-measure to their anti-Congress Socialist Party and capture tactics. Experience has completely vindicated Masani's stand. But to continue. It was the fear that the Party Conference might not endorse the Patna decision, but also go beyond it, that led the communists to communicate that note to the Party. That they were wholly insincere was made abundantly clear at the Conference itself.

The Executive naturally did not take the Communist Party statement seriously, and the Conference endorsed the Patna Decision. The Party, however, still held fast to

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the objective of unity, and it put forward the slogan of "unity in action" as a preliminary process. The communist members were allowed to continue in the Party. The weakness of the Executive in this regard was reflected by the Conference. It was clear that the time had come to send the communists packing from the Party, but the Executive refused to face the situation. It had not much faith in the success of its new slogan, 'unity in action', but it clutched at it to save itself from taking an unpleasant decision. As a result the Party embarked on a career of sheer drift which ended but recently.

It has been remarked above that the conduct of the communists at the Conference completely belied their solemn note. During the elections for the Executive, they made and put up an alternative communist list and voted for it *en bloc*. In other words even while they talked and breathed unity they made a secret bid to capture the Party. Now, it is elementary politics that capture and unity politics are poles apart and contradict each other. But in the peculiar dialectics of the communists all contradictions are reconciled. It cannot be wondered therefore, that they not unoften equate counter-revolution with revolution.

Some months after Lahore came another shocking evidence. A circular of the Communist Party fell into Comrade Masani's hands, who published it under the title "Communist Plot against the Congress Socialist Party." The circular laid down in detail the tactics to be followed by the communists to capture the organizations of the Party. Here was further evidence of the unity tactics of the Communist Party. For many comrades that circular was the proverbial straw. Yet, the Executive again held its hands, and allowed things to drift. Now it was no longer the ideal or hope of unity that decided the Executive: it was just reluctance to face an unpleasant task. Those were dark days for the Party, when lack of decision created a good deal of confusion and weakness. The enemies of the Party did not fail to profit fully by it.

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This drift and paralysis of the Party continued. There were only two ways out of the stalemate: either an immediate merger of the Communist Party and the Congress Socialist Party or the creation of a completely homogeneous Congress Socialist Party with all members of other parties immediately removed from it. In view of the experience already granted, there was little possibility of the success of the first alternative. However, as my opinion regarding the Communist Party died hard I mooted the question with the leaders of that party. It was obvious that without a common ideological basis a merger was out of the question. Therefore it was agreed to explore such a basis. But there was little progress made in that direction. In the meanwhile differences grew wider between the two parties in the field of day-to-day politics. Then came Tripuri, and then Calcutta. The Communist Party, lacking ballast and independent strength in the national movement, grew panicky and in order to satisfy its ambition to lead the Left ran widely after whoever declaimed loudest.

The first alternative was clearly an impossibility. But the Executive still lacked the courage to take recourse to the other. This policy of drift which was daily delivering the Party into the hands of the Communist Party drove some of the leading members of the Executive to resign. This produced great consternation in the ranks of the Congress Socialist Party, though it was welcomed by the Communist Party and its "Trojan horses" and stooges.

In these circumstances a memorable meeting of the Executive was held in Bombay in 1939, at the time of the All-India Congress Committee session. At this meeting practically every member, excepting those who belonged to the Communist Party expressed the view that it was high time to check the drift and stop internal disruption. For this purpose, it was the overwhelming opinion of the Committee that all communists and others who belonged to any other party should be asked to leave the Party. After a long discussion, the question was left by the Committee to my deci-

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sion as General Secretary. I did not feel happy at the prospect of precipitating a grave crisis in the socialist movement. I gave a sort of compromised decision. I fully accepted the ideal of a homogeneous Congress Socialist Party, but advised that communists who were already members of the Party should not be expelled, as that would lead to much bitterness and mutual destruction. I, however, emphasized that henceforth every attempt should be made to keep the control of the Party in the hands of genuine members, i.e., those who were not members of any other party. The decision was accepted by the Executive. Henceforth, the slogan was that of a homogeneous party. It was an advance over the previous position, but still suffered from not making a complete break from the policy that had led the Party into such a morass.

In practice, the Bombay decision, half-hearted as it was, found still more half-hearted application. In fact, it remained entirely inoperative till the declaration of the European War. And here we must record a remarkable, if also a regrettable, fact. It was after the Bombay decision that the General Secretary, acting on his own authority, allowed eight communists to be admitted into the Allahabad committee of the U. P. Party. To such lengths was the Secretary of the Party prepared to go to accommodate the communists in the hope that they might reciprocate in the same spirit and a new chapter might be opened in the history of the socialist movement in this country. But it was all in vain. Every opportunity offered to the Communist Party was used against the Congress Socialist Party.

In September, 1939, came the European War. The War made no change in the policy of our Party as far as it related to socialist unity. We have traced above the development of this question up to the beginning of the War. We have seen how starting with enthusiasm for a policy of unity by bringing all socialist elements into the Party, we were forced step by step to give up that policy, and, finally, to arrive at the objective of a homogeneous Congress So-

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cialist Party. The emergency created by the War and the possibility of wide-spread repression and of illegal functioning made it necessary to make certain organizational arrangements and also to give effect to the Bombay decision. Accordingly, soon after the beginning of the War small emergency committees were set up in the provinces, and care was taken to see that they were homogeneous committees. The Communists were still within the Party. The Party was still ready for full co-operation with the Communist Party provided it was honest co-operation in actual work and not merely setting up of high-sounding committees.

As regards the Communist Party, soon after the War began, its policy underwent a sudden change. It tore off its mask completely and stood as the sworn enemy of the Congress Socialist Party and of every other progressive organization with which it had worked before, the Congress as well as the Forward Bloc.

It is necessary to relate just one incident to put this *volte-face* of the Communist Party in its proper perspective. In October 1939 a meeting of the representatives of certain leftist organizations was held at Lucknow at the instance of Shri Subhas Chandra Bose. At this meeting a proposal was put forward by the representatives of the Communist Party and the other groups to form a sort of "joint command" to conduct the anti-war activities of the various groups. The representatives of the Party opposed that proposal as impractical due to lack of sufficient political unanimity and mutual confidence. They made a counter-proposal: namely, that a "common programme of work" be chalked out to be carried out by all groups in co-operation with one another. This proposal was accepted in the end, and a seven-point programme was chalked out which was accepted by all the representatives present. With that the meeting ended, and it was hoped that since an agreement had been arrived at on the concrete nature of future work, there would be full co-operation at least

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between the parties that were represented at it. That meeting might well have proved to be of momentous importance. But it was not to be. We had reckoned without the Communist Party.

It was hardly three weeks later that a Communist Party thesis appeared making a frontal attack on the Congress Socialist Party. With that we were back in the primitive days of 1934. To this day it has not been made clear what it was that led the Communist Party to declare war so suddenly on the Congress Socialist Party. Surely, between the Lucknow meeting and the early part of November when the Communist Party thesis appeared, or at any time before or after, the Congress Socialist Party had been guilty of no crime against the Communist Party. Only a few weeks before the Communist Party had agreed to carry out a common programme. It was demonstrating a strange method of doing it. Well, be that as it may, the fact is that in November, 1939, the Congress Socialist Party completely fell from grace, and since then has been subject to a most vicious attack. Indeed an early (1940) Communist Party document has already celebrated the demise of the Congress Socialist Party and examined in a learned Marxian manner, peculiar to the Communist Party alone, the reasons for such a lamentable—or, rather, happy—event. It is not at all an inconsistency if February 1941 number of the Communist Party organ threatens to publish a history of the Congress Socialist Party since Ramgarh. One may be sure that this will be only a spiritual history—the history of a ghost! It is only the ghost of the Congress Socialist Party that is playing on the Polit-bureau, and it must slay it on paper to be rid of the nightmare.

Why did the Communist Party suddenly start attacking the Congress Socialist Party and every body else? There was a political reason. With the advent of War, the Communist Party discerned the approach of the revolution. At such a moment it did not want that any other party should be about to dispute the leadership of the coming historic

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event! It desired to appear before the masses—workers, peasants, students (above all students, mark you)—as the sole revolutionary party in the country. It could brook no competition, and when power came to be seized it wanted no shareholders at all. The Communist Party *uber alles*! It was a magnificent ambition, clearly in accord with the Marxism that the Communist Party understands. The natural corollary of this thesis of megalomania was that other parties must perish, i.e., their hold over the masses must be destroyed. Therefore, the scribes of the Polit-bureau set about filling up reams of paper with stuff highly intelligible to the masses, well-versed as they are in the jargon of the learned writers. And lo and behold, the Congress, and the Congress Socialist Party have all disappeared into thin air, and the Polit-bureau is soon to be converted into the Council of Commissars!

A lovely dream from which there is sure to be a rather rude awakening. It will not be long before another learned thesis of the Communist Party painfully dilates upon the mistakes of this historic period!

To bring this story to an end. The Congress Socialist Party did not retaliate against the Communist Party offensive. It did not even expel the communists from the Party for some time. It declared that, while it must criticise the mistakes of the Communist Party, it wished it no ill-will and was prepared to co-operate with it as a sister revolutionary party. It raised its voice against the disruption that was being caused to the social movement. But all these gestures were rejected with jeers, and the war on the Party went apace. At Ramgarh, when no other alternative was available, the National Executive, more than four years after Meerut, was compelled to expel from the Party all those who were either members of the Communist Party or its agents. Thus ended a tragic chapter in the history of the Indian socialist movement. It should be made clear that in taking this decision the Executive was not launching upon any manner of campaign against the Communist

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Party. That decision was merely an elementary organizational measure, long-overdue, and expressed simply in the idea that a party may have no one as a member who is a member or an instrument of a hostile party.

IV

Conclusions. The above history makes clear the effort made by our Party to bring about unity in the socialist movement and how they failed. Except for the earlier months, this problem of socialist unity was really a problem of the coming together of the Communist Party and the Congress Socialist Party. We have seen how the tactics of the Communist Party made that impossible. But it would be a mistake to blame the Communist Party for those tactics. They were inevitable. In the very nature of things the Communist Party could not have behaved otherwise. This was not clear to us before, otherwise our Party would have been much stronger today. But now that it is clear, every comrade must fully grasp its meaning.

The inevitability of which we have spoken is inherent in the nature of the international communist movement. This movement is not formed from the bottom upwards. The Third International is not an organization of genuine working members of its Central Committee, rushed to denounce various countries, but a central organization controlled entirely from above by the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R. with branches in the various countries. The Third International must have a branch in every important country (except those, such as Turkey, the government of which has a pact with the Russian government prohibiting the formation of such a branch). The Communist Party of India is such a branch. It cannot therefore unite with any other party and cease to be a branch. It is possible for the Communist Party to "unite" with another socialist party only when the united party itself becomes a branch of the Third International—in which case unity is a misnomer—or, when the Communist Party secretly works as such a branch

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within the united party hoping to capture it eventually—in which case again unity is a misnomer. Therefore, it is desirable once for all to give up vague talk of unity with the Communist Party. It is possible to unite with such socialist parties as are not sub-feudatories like the Communist Party but unity with the latter has no meaning. Its only meaning is that the Congress Socialist Party too becomes a branch of the Third International, i.e., it becomes a part of the Communist Party.

Here, the question arises: why does not the Congress Socialist Party affiliate with the Communist International, i.e., become amalgamated with the Communist Party? Is the Congress Socialist Party anti-Communist International or anti-Russia? It is neither.

But the question of affiliation is beset with grave and insuperable difficulties. The Congress Socialist Party is not a party transplanted from outside. It is a growth of the Indian soil. It was not inspired by any outside force. It grew and developed out of the experiences of the Indian people struggling for freedom. Its very formation was a protest and revolt against the line the Third International pursued in India. The initial fact was enough to instil into the Congress Socialist Party entire lack of respect for the wisdom and guidance of the International. Subsequent events did not improve matters. Immediately after the formation of the Party, the Indian branch of the International, viciously attacked it. Leaders of the latter, including members of its Central Committee, rushed to denounce it as "social fascist". All this was not exactly calculated to draw us nearer the International. However, on our own initiative, we did attempt to draw nearer to the Communist Party, but were sorely deceived.

The International claims to be the leader of the World Revolution. As such, it was its duty to encourage and draw together all the revolutionary forces, wherever found. Instead it has functioned as a narrow sectarian Church, supporting its own sect and calling curses upon

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the heads of all others. In the six years of the life of the Congress Socialist Party, in spite of its standing as a significant revolutionary force in the country, the International made no attempts to get into contact with it or help or encourage it in any way. On the other hand its Indian agents did everything possible to destroy it. Is it not more appropriate to ask the leader of the world revolution, why it failed to draw the Congress Socialist Party within its fold?

In this connection might also be urged the wide divergence between the policies of the Congress Socialist Party and of the International as applied to India. Past differences have been indicated above. Let us turn to the present position. The Communist Party, once again is ploughing its lonely furrow and has pitted itself against the Congress, and the Congress Socialist Party. It is condemning outright the *Satyagraha* movement. In a recent publication it made fun of even such a serious thing as the disappearance of Subhas Babu. The Communist Party alone will create and lead the revolution. This is the policy of the International. The Congress Socialist Party is totally different. It stands still for co-operation between various groups; it does not oppose the *Satyagraha* movement, nor the Congress. It criticises the inadequacies of the movement, its background of compromise, its future dangers, but co-operates with it, arguing that isolation with the national struggle (limited though it be) would be disastrous for the revolutionary forces. It at the same time works to develop the labour and peasant movements, with a view to precipitate a mass revolutionary struggle when the occasion arises. Thus, once again the Communist Party and the Congress Socialist Party, and therefore the International and the Congress Socialist Party are widely separated in their policies.

We might urge a last consideration. There is a large body of opinion, claiming to be Marxist, in the International working class movement which alleges that the Communist International is no more than a bureau of the

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Soviet Foreign Office, and that its policies are solely dictated by the exigencies of Russian foreign policy. Even such a sympathetic author as Edgar Snow in his *Red Star Over China* echoes the same sentiments in his discussions of the relations between the Chinese Communist Party and the Communist International. The frequent and violent twists and turns in the policies of the communist parties throughout the world before and after the War lend colour to this view. Whatever be the truth, one fact is clear—that every communist party must follow the dictates from Moscow because Moscow alone knows what is good or bad for Russia. Now, the Congress Socialist Party, while recognising that the position and role of the U.S.S.R. must enter into every socialist calculation, is not prepared to follow dictates from anywhere. Moreover, affiliating with the International not only means following its dictates, but also being obliged to uphold any and every action of the Russian Government. We are not prepared for such a subservience.

The above considerations should make it clear why we cannot affiliate with the Third International. We should add that our attitude nevertheless remains one of utmost cordiality (in spite of the International's attitude of hostility) and however futile it may be the hand of co-operation will always be extended by us.

To return to the Communist Party. It might be asked why, if it did not believe in unity, did it agree to send its members into the Congress Socialist Party. For two obvious reasons. It might be recalled that for some time it refused to have anything to do with us. But when it was ordered by the International to change its policy and to enter the Congress it found itself faced with a serious problem. It had no contacts with the Congress, and, of course, it must become at once the leader of the national forces. It was here that it found in the Congress Socialist Party an ideal instrument. The Congress Socialist Party held a strategic position within the Congress. The communists

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were anxious to get into the Provincial Congress Committees, the Executives, the All-India Congress Committee, possibly the Working Committee. With their own resources it was impossible for them to get anywhere near them. They were not four-anna members yet. Here was the Congress Socialist Party with its members even in the highest committees. "Three cheers for the Congress Socialist Party. Let us join it." They did, and the Congress Socialist Party votes sent them as high as the All-India Congress Committee and the Provincial Executives. In addition, being an open party, the Congress Socialist Party afforded a splendid platform for self-advertisement to these, till then, practically unknown communists. What was the other reason for their entering the Party? It has been pointed out that in their view no socialist party apart from the Communist Party had any right to exist. The growth of the Congress Socialist Party into an independent party was a danger to their monopoly. Therefore, they took advantage of the opportunity to enter the Party so as either to capture or break it up. These were the two purposes that brought them into the Party. But, in order to gain admittance, they had to accept the slogan of socialist unity, for, otherwise there was no reason why the Congress Socialist Party should have let them come in. So, behind the smoke-screen of unity, they worked out their plans.

The foregoing has made it clear that the whole idea of unity with a party like the Communist Party was misconceived and the fundamental difficulties were not understood. But apart from that the manner in which unity was sought to be brought about was itself a grievous mistake. It was very wrong to have admitted members of other parties into our Party. This was against all sound principles of organisation. The experiment should never be repeated. It cannot but lead to internal confusion and conflict. It should be kept in mind that nowhere in the world has an attempt to unite two parties been made by allowing the infiltration of members of one into the other-

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The Congress Socialist Party tried it and found it to be a disastrous experiment.

In this connection a point is often made in Party discussions. Why was the Communist Party alone able to do fraction work? Why could not we do the same? For two simple reasons. Communists had the opportunity of doing it, because we had given them a place in the Party. We had no such opportunity, because we had neither the desire nor the occasion to enter their party. Secondly, and this is the more important reason, fraction work is contradictory to unity. We believed sincerely in unity; therefore, the question of fraction work did not arise at all.

Since the decision to expel the communists was taken, persistent propaganda has been carried on by the Communist Party to represent it as an anti-communist drive. It should be fully understood that there was nothing anti-communist in that decision. It was a measure of self-defence taken against the anti-Congress Socialist Party drive of the Communist Party. The communists had no place in our Party by rights; they had been admitted for a specific purpose, namely, that of uniting the two parties. When the Communist Party turned into an open enemy of the Congress Socialist Party and started a vigorous campaign to destroy it, and when the communists within the Congress Socialist Party began to function openly as its enemies, trying to undermine its influence and solidarity, the least that the Party could do was to remove them from its membership. No party can afford to keep within its ranks members who are its open enemies. It should, however, be realised at the same time that the expulsion of the communists was in no manner an offensive against the Communist Party itself as an independent party.

With relation to the expulsion of the Communists a question is often asked, sometimes inspired by communists whether the National Executive was a competent body to take such a decision. Is not the Party Conference the proper authority to decide such questions? The answer is

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that the National Executive was fully competent to take the decision in question. Since the beginning of this matter, it has always been the Executive that took decisions regarding it. The decision to admit the communists into the Party was not a decision of any Party Conference, but of the Executive at Meerut. Had it been a Conference decision, only another Conference could have rescinded it. As it was, the Executive was fully competent to rescind it. There was a reason why this matter was kept strictly confined to the Executive. The Communist Party was and is an illegal party. Any question relating to it could not be taken to the Conference. It was only during the Congress Ministries when a measure of civil liberties was enjoyed that the matter was first discussed with any measure of freedom.

In raising the question just discussed, it is the purpose of Communists to paint the Executive as an anti-communist body, and to suggest that if the matter had been referred to a Party Conference, the result would have been different. The history of our relations with the Communists, given in section 3, is enough to show to what lengths the Executive went to accommodate them. When the Executive at Meerut decided to admit them into the Party, it was under no pressure from the rank and file. Subsequently, even after clear proof of their disruptive tactics, the Executive bore with them, it was again under no such pressure. When the Andhra Party was handed over to them, when even after the Bombay decision, eight communists were admitted into the Allahabad Committee, it was not in response to any clamour from the rank and file. When even today, in spite of the Communist Party crusade against the Party, the Executive offers it its hand of co-operation, it is not out of any fear of the rank and file. Nothing can be more ridiculous than this attempt of the Communist Party to try to put the members of the Party against the Executive.

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Another common, and often inspired question, is: why should there be two socialist parties; is not Marxism one and indivisible? This whole pamphlet is an answer to this question. Yes, Marxism, is one and indivisible. The important question, however, is, how is Marxism to be applied to a given social situation? In 1934 too Marxism was one. Yet the way the Communist Party and the Third International applied it, and the way the Congress Socialist Party applied it, were poles apart. There you have the answer in a nutshell.

A Marxist never tries to understand a social fact by itself. He understands it historically and in relation with other facts. We all wish that there were only one Marxist party. But, if we wish to understand how in a concrete situation two Marxist parties came to exist, we must look at the matter historically. During the national struggle of 1930-34, there was a considerable radicalization of the younger cadres of the Congress. By 1934 a coherent socialist group crystallized. Between this group and the existing group, i.e., the Communist Party, there was an impenetrable wall in the shape of the latter's attitude towards and isolation from the Congress. A new party was bound to be formed: the Congress Socialist Party thus came into being as a result of the mistaken policy of the Communist Party and the Communist International.

What happened after this second party was formed has already been described in detail. Since its birth this Party, i.e., Congress Socialist Party, made attempts to create a single Marxist party. It failed because the Communist Party did not want unity. As a result of this historical process, there are still two parties in existence. The present differences between the two parties have already been discussed, as also the difficulty arising from the question of international affiliation. As long as these differences and difficulties last, there will continue to be two parties.

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To many this would appear to be unfortunate as it does to me, but in the circumstances described in detail in this pamphlet it is equally clear to me that it is inevitable. I am glad about one thing that in spite of the misgivings of some friends we tried the experiment as was consistent with the attitude of a party which from its very birth endeavoured to bring about as close a co-operation as possible between all the Socialist groups in the country, if not actual unity. I can also say with confidence that if the other groups had also adopted a less sectarian attitude the result of our endeavours might have been different. Let us hope that some day, not in the distant future, it will be realised that the cause is greater than petty fractional or sectarian advantages.

VI

ARTICLES AND STATEMENTS

- 1** NOTES ON THE FAIZPUR CONGRESS (1936)
- 2** POLITICAL EARTHQUAKE IN BIHAR (1937)
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(1940)

ARTICLES AND STATEMENTS

I

Notes on the Faizpur Congress (1936)

THOSE who were not present at Faizpur and who had little time to read beyond headlines in the newspapers are not likely to have understood the real significance of the Faizpur Congress. The headlines seem to have taught two lessons: First, that the socialists got an all-round thrashing; second, that the Faizpur Congress was a grand success because everybody said so.

That the Faizpur Congress was a notable success cannot be questioned. But it would be a grave error to relate in any manner the meaning of that success with the sub-editors' headlines.

The Faizpur Congress was a success in many ways. First, it was a great success as the first village Congress. The lakhs of peasants who flocked to it gave it a meaning and a content which were new in the history of the Congress. The leaders of the Maharashtra Congress deserve our utmost praise for the courage with which they went on with their bold experiment and our gratitude for showing us a new path to follow.

The real success of the last Congress, however, lies in the definite, and I hope lasting, check that it gave to the forces of the Right. I am not suggesting that the Right was decisively defeated at Faizpur. The Right is still the stronger wing. But Faizpur put an end to its aggression, and I have little doubt that henceforth the Left will steadily grow till it comes to dominate the Congress.

This may appeal to some as wishful thinking. There are friends who have expressed their disappointment be-

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cause we did not "put up a strong fight". Fighting there was, of course, but not enough to satisfy those whose only conception of politics is indiscriminate opposition. The fact of the matter is that many of the official resolutions were themselves the products of Left propaganda and leadership. Such were the agrarian, the war, the mass contacts—to name only a few—resolutions. Several other resolutions which came from the Working Committee were readily amended in the manner demanded by the Left. The most notable of such was the Convention resolution. Lastly, there was the resolution regarding Hartal on April 1. The Working Committee had turned it down and yet it was carried by an overwhelming majority in the Subjects Committee. There were some notable defeats also, such as that on the office issue. However, the fight on this issue was not a straight one, i.e., between those who were against office and those who were for it, but between the first and all those who were opposed to deciding the issue at Faizpur, I have little doubt that when the straight issue will be fought a few weeks hence, the Left will succeed in convincing the Congress that the only course consistent with its ideals and declarations is to reject offices.

When the Working Committee published its resolution on the proposed Convention some days before the Congress session, I confess, I felt rather apprehensive. The newspapers featured it under steamer headlines of "A National Convention". The thought that we could call, anything like a National Convention at the present stage of our struggle and under the aegis of imperialism seemed too dangerous to be allowed to get currency. Secondly, that even under present conditions it was not the plenary session of the Congress but a smaller and less representative body, and a body removed from the struggle, that was conceived of as a National Convention also seemed to be a dangerous idea.

The amendments that were made in the resolution at Faizpur and the assurances that were given in its connec-

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tion have removed these dangers to a large extent. It has been made that the Convention can in no manner be conceived as a National Convention or as a step towards it. It has been called merely as a demonstration and so as to ensure that the different provincial Congress parties do not go in different directions but follow a common and mutually understood policy. It has also been made clear that the Convention will not determine any question of policy but only ways and means of carrying out the policy or policies laid down by the Congress and the A.I.C.C. that will meet immediately before the Convention.

Thus shorn of its dangerous attributes, the Convention becomes only a weapon in our struggle against the slave constitution and nothing more. It will concentrate the country's opposition to the constitution as no other single demonstration could do. It will therefore be a most valuable weapon.

I should give a warning, however. There are elements in the Congress who will seek every opportunity to clothe the Convention with those very attributes of which it has been shorn. In that Convention there will be many, unfortunately, who are not tried soldiers of the Congress, who till the other day held titles under imperialism, who are close to the vested interests in the country. There will be a pull by these forces in a different direction. They would resent the "interference" of the A.I.C.C. and there would be others in the Congress to support them. We must therefore be vigilant.

It was after two years that Gandhiji made his appearance on the Congress rostrum. The President of the Congress had just finished his inspiring address. As Gandhiji climbed up and his small figure came into view, there was a spontaneous sensation of joy and enthusiasm in that vast sea of humanity which was the Faizpur session of the Congress. There were a lakh of people or more to hear him.

Gandhiji had made his first political speech the same day a few hours before. I was not able to hear him then.

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I therefore followed his speech with utmost concentration. The man who moved India's millions more than any one else in the near past was, it seemed, again taking the field. What was he going to say? Since he left the Congress a great many things had happened. The Congress had slowly but steadily been moving towards new visions and new paths; momentous issues and keen controversies had raged within its camp. Was he going to make a pronouncement on them? With these questions uppermost in the mind I followed every word that fell from his toothless lips. There was the same old self-confidence in him, the same sense of mastery. But as his words rolled on they fell, so it seemed to me—more and more flatly. When he finished there was no cheering, no waves of acclamation breaking through in cries of "Gandhi-ki-Jai."

In his speech Gandhiji sublimely ignored all that had happened in the Congress since he retired from its active work. It seemed as if he had come merely to remind us of his programme and his undiminished faith in it; to tell us that whatever we may say or do, his was the path that led to victory. The new ideas, the new programmes that were coming more and more to the forefront meant nothing to him it seemed. He took no notice of them. He repeated that unless the programmes of khadi, untouchability, village industries, Hindu-Muslim unity were fulfilled, India would not be freed. I do not think his reminder produced any deep impression. As challenge to the Left, if it was a challenge, I must say that it was completely ineffective.

Our success at Faizpur throws upon us a great responsibility. There are, unfortunately people in our ranks who think that criticism is the beginning and end of our activities. We must fight this mentality and put our shoulders to the wheel and carry forward the Congress programme. The first task before us is to make the *hartal* on April 1, a resounding success. Onward Comrades!

2

Political Earthquake in Bihar (1937)

BIHAR is in the grip of election fever. A province where the Congress has penetrated deep into the villages, the General Election has roused the entire countryside.

Reports of the polling of the past four days show that the Congress is sweeping everything before it—big landed magnates who have the cruel audacity to seek the suffrage of those whom they have beaten, badgered and bled white; ministerial candidates who constitute formidable combines of wealth and borrowed power; communalists and weighty frauds.

The sweep of the Congress reminds one of the recent floods that washed away all obstacles before them. On the first day I witnessed polling at two stations. The excitement is indescribable. The entire prospect before the booths was a sea of tricolours in which the ensigns of the rival candidates appeared as insignificant specks of dirt. National cries and slogans drowned everything else. Crowds of voters came marching with banners and songs and the raucous thudding of drums. They came mostly on foot, but there were elephants and horses too with the tricolour flying!

As I watched all this, freedom seemed to rise up from the dust that lay over everything in that unforgettable demonstration. And I wondered how frenzied would the crowd be and how high would run its enthusiasm when it would meet, not in the distant future, to elect its representatives to its first real assembly—the Constituent Assembly!

The Election campaign in Bihar began in right earnest after the visit of the stormy Pandit Nehru. In this pro-

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vince of frequent natural calamities, everything reminds one of the wrathful demonstrations of nature.

If the landslide at the polls reminds us of the great floods, Pandit Jawaharlal's visit inevitably makes us think of the great earthquake. For his visit was a veritable political earthquake. He shook up the whole province as nothing else had done in the recent past. It was as if a giant had come forth who picked up the sleeping province in his hands and gave it a mighty shake-up that brought it to life and consciousness. Wherever he went the populace rose up, as if from the very furrows of the fields, to see and hear his message. And his speeches! Simple, they went straight to the hearts of the people; and they opened their eyes. The peasants' common comment was *Babuji Hamari Ankhon ka To Parda Gir Gaya*. The Election had been won!

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The response and enthusiasm of the people have been a revelation to us. And such touching faith in the Congress! Simple peasants, they enter the booth as if it were a place of worship, drop their cards in "Gandhiji's" box and joining their hands devoutly make their salutation. Thousands come trekking from distant homes without inducements, defying threat and coercion, and shouting *Swatantra Bharat ki jai* to vote for the Congress.

The Congress is their hope—it will relieve them of their distress. This march of the hungry peasant to the polling booth is prelude to the march to the battle-field.

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Apart from far-reaching political results the election is producing two interesting, and no less far-reaching, social results. Bihar lives under two masters; the British power and the great landlords. The biggest landlords in the country live in Bihar. In respect of these "lords" the social status of the tenants, no matter of what caste or community or of what economic or other circumstances, is such as could exist only in a country of slaves. There are

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landlords whose wealthiest tenants may not sit down in their presence and may not come with their shoes on. There are prescribed forms of salutation. And the terror to which the tenantry is subjected! The tenants are so many cattle at whom the lord may not even deign to cast a look.

Now, the same lord, if he is a candidate—and fortunately some of the most oppressive are in the ring—goes from door to door begging for votes, promising redress and relief, fraternising and rubbing shoulders with his cattle. The result is bridging of the social distance that separated master and slave.

The slave is coming to his own. The vote is making him a man. The terror falls off from his heart like a veil. He looks at the world with a new sense of self-respect and dignity. And, if the master is defeated, as in most cases he will be, he shall cease henceforth to be any thing but a landlord entitled a little more than the rent of his land. This in Bihar will be an important social change.

The other important social result is in the sphere of the Hindu social organisation. Our Hindu society is organised on the basis of caste which to-day is nothing more but a division of human beings into a hierarchy of social positions. The election has come as a powerful challenge to this scheme of things. Such challenge had so far come from social reformers. The so-called lower castes themselves were more or less quiescent. The election has roused them. They see that upper-caste men, who after all are a handful compared with them, are taking all the plumes and are doing so largely with their own votes. Why should they allow this? Why can they not have the plumes for themselves? *Ideas of Social equality are rising and spreading fast—ideas that promise to batter down this monstrous structure of Hindu society which has been the dream of reformers to abolish.*

At present it is the opportunists and self-seekers who are trying to exploit the growth of this feeling. But it has

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nevertheless set the whole Hindu society in ferment and started a process of democratization in it that augurs a deep-going social revolution in India.

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I feel I shall not be taking too much advantage of your readers' indulgence if I mentioned a conversation I had the other day with a casual co-traveller. A railway compartment is a fairly representative slice of real life. And the classes in the railway trains correspond roughly to the classes in society. The Inter Class corresponds to my mind the lower middle class in the Great Society outside. I happened to be among the lower middle class on this particular occasion. There was a bright looking young Muslim, who looked like a recent graduate. I was attracted to him and picked up a conversation with him. His brightness was not only physical, but apparently he had a very keen mind also.

He had the "good fortune", as he himself put it, to hear Pandit Jawaharlal at one of his great meetings and he was full of him. Jawaharlal was the only leader. He could lead the Muslims and Hindus alike. The Congress was the only organisation which was selfless and which worked for the good of the people. The rest were all self-seekers. He himself had worked for the Independent Muslim Party, but was disgusted with it. He described it as *andhon men kana raja* (among the blind the one-eyed is the king). He did not think of his Party, but it was best of the lot! Which, of course, is true. The other parties are worse still.

The Independent Muslim Party comes nearest to the nationalist position. But only in words. Its candidates are mostly reactionaries, pro-imperialist and communalist. In one constituency it is even fighting the Congress Muslim candidate! And these were the main grievances of my Muslim fellow-traveller against his Party. He regretted that the Congress did not enter the Muslim constituencies more boldly and put in more candidates.

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My friends have told me that in the villages Muslim peasants often asked them who the Congress candidate was and for whom they should vote and they felt disappointed when they were informed that Congress was not in contest. I think, not fighting the Muslim seats will go down as one of the major mistakes of the Congress in the election campaign.

* * * *

Every shield has "the other side". Universal response to the Congress at the polls is one side, and the brighter side, of the shield. The other side is the failure to make full use of the campaign. The tendency in most constituencies has been to make the election a matter of personal success. Ideas and principles were thrust into the background. Groups of workers here and there, mostly socialists, but some others also such as the workers of the Kisan Sabha were bravely counteracting this tendency, and in several areas very successfully. It was Pandit Jawaharlal's visit that revolutionised the campaign generally and a new tone was given to it which is being kept up to an extent.

It is to be regretted that the provincial leaders have not given any lead yet to turn the election campaign to some permanent good to the Congress organisation. Attempts, however, are being made to save the machinery that has sprung up to meet the needs of the election and preserve the forces that have been created. The credit for this too must go to the socialist workers. Their popular idea in this connection seems to be to build *ashrams* or workers' camps in every thana and to raise a corps of volunteers from out of the election workers and agents.

The other night as I was returning from an election meeting perched on a rustic ekka I happened to pass by a smithy. Suddenly, I heard the cry *Swatantra Bharat ki-jai* followed by the age-old cry *Raja Ramchandra ki-jai*.

Apparently a group of workers was listening to a recitation of Ramayana which is periodically punctuated by the most popular of popular cries *Raja Ramchandra ki-jai*

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etc. But the thought, that a national cry had gained such respectability and popularity as to be coupled with this religious and deeply devout cry gripped my mind. It signified nothing short of a great mental revolution among the people. The Revolution has almost matured, I thought.

3

Statement at the Prosecution, Jamshedpur (1940)

“I HAVE been charged with trying to impede the production of munitions and other supplies essential to the efficient prosecution of the War, and with trying to influence the conduct and attitude of the public in a manner prejudicial to the defence of British India and the efficient prosecution of the war. I plead guilty to these charges.

“These charges, however, do not constitute a guilt for me but a duty which I discharge, regardless of the consequences. That they also constitute an offence under certain laws of the Foreign Government, established by force in this country, does not concern me. The object of these laws is diametrically opposed to the object of nationalist India, of which I am but a humble representative. That we should come in conflict is only natural.

“My country is not party to this War in any manner, for it regards both German Nazism and British Imperialism as evils and enemies. It finds that both the sides in this War are driven by selfish ends of conquest and domination, exploitation and oppression. Great Britain is fighting not to destroy Nazism, which it has nurtured, but to curb a rival, whose might can no longer be allowed to grow unchallenged. It is fighting to maintain its dominant place in the world and to preserve its imperial power and glory. As far as India is concerned, Great Britain is fighting to perpetuate the Indian Empire.

“Plainly, India can have no truck with such a War. No Indian can permit the resources of his country to be utilised to buttress up imperialism and to be converted through the processes of the War into the chains of his country's slavery. The Congress, the only representative voice of nationalist India, has already pointed out this sacred duty

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to the people of this country. I, as an humble servant of the Congress, have only tried to fulfil this duty.

"The British Government, on the other hand, in utter disregard for Indian opinion, has declared India a belligerent power and is utilising Indian men, money and materials for a war to which we have pledged our uncompromising opposition. This is in the nature of an aggression against India, no less serious in the circumstances than German aggression against Poland. India cannot but resist this aggression. It, therefore, becomes the patriotic duty of every Indian to oppose the attempt of the British Government to use country's resources for its imperialist end. Thus the charge framed against me of trying to impede the efficient prosecution of the War is only the fulfilment of a patriotic duty. That the British Government should consider, what is a duty for patriotic India to be an offence, only proves further its imperialist character.

"Regarding the speech for which I am being prosecuted, I cannot say how far it succeeded in achieving its ends. But nothing would please me more than to learn that it did have some success in impeding the effective prosecution of the War. I shall deem the heaviest punishment well earned if I am found to have succeeded in this.

"As for the charge of endangering the defence of British India I think the irony of it cannot be lost upon us. A slave has no obligation to defend his slavery. His only obligation is to destroy his bondage. I hope we shall know how to defend ourselves when we have achieved our freedom.

"I consider it fortunate that I have been prosecuted for a Jamshedpur speech. This important industrial centre, which I consider the most important in the country is peculiarly backward politically and from the point of view of the labour movement. I shall derive some satisfaction in prison, where I expect inevitably to find myself, from the thought that my arrest and incarceration for a speech delivered there has attracted to that city, the notice of the political and labour leaders of my country. It seems

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scandalous to me that the country's most vital resources should be so wasted in a War to which we are so firmly opposed. And it seems no less scandalous to me that while Labour throughout the country should be reacting vigorously to the conditions created by the War, Jamshedpur Labour should carry on as if nothing extraordinary has happened. May at least, the demand for a war bonus gain some momentum from this prosecution.

"Before concluding I should like to add that at least, as an Englishman you should not misunderstand me. I should make it clear that in impeding prosecution of the War, I have no desire to help Germany or to see Germany victorious. I desire the victory neither of Imperialism nor of Nazism. Yet, as a Congressman and a Socialist I have nothing but goodwill for the British and German people. If India's opposition to Britain's Imperialist War ensures a Nazi victory, it is for the British people to decide, whether they would have Nazi hegemony or victory with real democracy at home and in India. If the people of Great Britain remove their present rule and renounce imperialism with its capitalist rulers, not only India but the freedom-loving people of the whole world would exert themselves to see the defeat of Nazism and the victory of freedom and democracy. In the present circumstances, however, India has no alternative but to fight and end British imperialism. Only in that manner can it contribute to the peace and progress of the world.

"I am conscious, Sir, that I have made your task easier by this statement. I do not regret it.

"In the end I thank you for your courtesy and consideration during this trial."

VII

RECENT SPEECHES

- 1 SPEECH ON FIRST VISIT TO PATNA (1946)
- 2 SPEECH AT THE A.I.C.C. MEETING, BOMBAY (1946)

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Speech on First Visit To Patna (1946)

PREPARE FOR THE FINAL STRUGGLE

[Jayaprakash was given a tumultuous reception at his first meeting in Patna after release from Prison. The following account is reproduced *verbatim* from the *Indian Nation* (Daily: Patna April 22, 1946)]

PATNA, April 21: An unprecedented scene was witnessed in Patna this evening when almost over half of the capital assembled in the Bankipore Lawn to greet Mr. Jai Prakash Narain on the occasion of his first visit to Patna after the momentous August events. Never before, perhaps in the life of the capital for about a decade such a big crowd had assembled and listened to a leader with so much discipline and rapt attention—as was seen today. An hour before the scheduled time for the meeting, people tracked in from all directions till the spacious lawn turned into a unique sea of human heads. The big tri-colour flying high in the moonlight night and the shouts of 'Inquilab Zindabad' and 'Jai Hind' provided a picturesque setting to the grand reception of the great leader who was greeted with tremendous ovation as he came to the dais. He responded with folded hands.

Welcoming Mr. Jai Prakash Narain the Hon'ble Mr. Shri Krishna Sinha acclaimed him as the king of the youths' heart, and extended to him a warm reception on behalf of the people of the province.

The Prime Minister said that if the gathering of the evening showed any thing it was that India today was on

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the mouth of a great volcano and those who sat in judgment over our destiny would do well to take note of the fact.

The Prime Minister paid high tributes to the great personality of Mr. Jai Prakash Narain and observed that Jai Prakash was the symbol of the dreams and will of the people. Whatever he thought or did was calculated to see the millions of starving and naked people, fed and clothed: he dreamt of a society where everyone will have the freedom to move unfettered and with his head held high.

The power that kept Jai Prakash behind the prison bars ought really to be ashamed of its conduct, observed the Prime Minister. True, he continued, Jai Prakash broke the law of jail life, but there were occasions when such conduct was not to be judged from the prescribed laws but the demand of the political exigency.

Concluding the Prime Minister said: "I pray that Jai Prakash may live long and may he see his aspirations fulfilled soon. As a senior to him in age I extend my blessings to him."

Addresses were presented on behalf of the Students' Congress, Momin Students' Congress, and other public and private institutions. Miss Pramila Srivastava presented an address of welcome on behalf of the Science College Students and Mrs. Annapurna Devi as the representative of the women of the province. Besides a purse of Rs. 16,000 presented on behalf of the citizens of Patna individual contributions came on the spot in shape of ringlets and other ornaments and cash.

REMARKABLE POINTS

Remarkable points about the First public meeting addressed at Patna this evening by Jai Prakash Narain, the leader of what is called 1942 Revolution were: The great reception, almost unprecedented, arranged by the people of Patna.

Contribution for the purse by different sections of the people.

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A gathering not usually witnessed in this town. The attention with which the people heard a highly critical and analytical speech.

The first friendly but rather severe atomic bomb dropped on the High Command by a Socialist leader, in the shape of open criticism of trends in the Congress policy.

His assurance to preserve the unity of the Congress despite ill-treatment by a section of the right leadership.

Message of preparation for struggle in an atmosphere of parliamentary programme, maintaining that jail-going was out-of-date; guns and deaths were the needs of the hour.

Unwillingness to attach much importance to Delhi talks regardless of their outcome. Stresses of organisational work and a concrete programme with provision to review the progress of work done, monthly or quarterly.

Presence of the Prime Minister of the Province, as President of the meeting where revolutionary sentiments were expressed boldly and frankly.

The function started with a thrilling poem by Dinkar composed specially for the occasion. It was followed by some other spirited songs in praise of the August events. After the presentation of purse and addresses by various organisations, especially the students and women, the Prime Minister Mr. Shri Krishna Sinha mounted the dais to welcome the beloved leader on behalf of the people of this Province.

Clad in Gandhi cap and Khadi uniform and helping himself at short intervals with glass of water Mr. Jai Prakash Narain addressed the anxious but patient crowd for about an hour. Recounting the memorable events of August, 1942, he paid homage to the martyrs. Referring to the present Delhi talks he recalled the Gandhi-Irwin talks and the event following the Round Table Conference and made fervent appeal for all eventualities. The meeting which started at 6-30 p.m. ended at about 9 a.m. with thundering shouts of *Jai Prakash Zindabad, Inquilab Zindabad* and *Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai*.

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When Jai Prakash rose to address the vast gathering, he was tremendously applauded. Overwhelmed by the great reception and unprecedented enthusiasm of the people, he observed he was sensible enough to realise that not he personally, but the August spirit had been honoured. When he was in jail, he was wondering how and with whom he would be able to work for the country's cause when a free man. But the popular enthusiasm had now set his apprehensions at rest, and he felt convinced that the people were fully prepared to continue the struggle for independence.

Mr. Jai Prakash Narain addressing the people in a firm and determined tone said: "If the present compromising talks in New Delhi failed, the British would force a fight on the Congress just as they did in 1931. In that event, they would again be taken unprepared. The Government was taking all necessary precautions. Lists were being prepared and police stations were being equipped with ammunition and radio sets etc., why should not we prepare ourselves? Why should we sit with folded hands and miss the opportunity?"

Referring to the August Movement, he mentioned one very significant incident, namely, strike by the police at Jamshedpur. The authorities were alarmed and sent out British soldiers to control the situation. Some arrests were also made, but care was taken by the authorities not to give sufficient publicity and importance to the incident. It was a matter of pride to him that a tyrannical and loyal department like the police could also co-operate with the freedom struggle. He hoped that when the time came, the police all over would show the same spirit.

Dwelling on the attitude of the Congress High Command towards the August fighters, Jai Prakash said: "Congress leaders find fault with us. They point out our mistakes which we shall endeavour to remove. But they, too, have made mistakes which they will do well to consider.

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What happened in 1942 in this country does not often happen in any country always. It was a rare event, but it was not fully utilised. If we had to make the British quit, our leaders should have pointed out to us the method of achieving that object. On the one hand we gave a challenge to the British Government; on the other no programme was placed before us. Except Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, no leader gave a thought to the problem or admitted the mistake. They only tried to defend themselves by arguing that they had vested the leadership of the Congress in Gandhiji. But it was their duty to give us the lead. Their argument is without substance. Was that the proper attitude at the time of revolution? Was it an act of wisdom? They should have formulated a programme. I cannot accept the argument that our High Command knows everything and that we need not think and prepare for the struggle.

"About forty thousand persons lost their lives during the August Movement. The leaders are responsible for that great sacrifice of human lives. The people did not know how to conduct the fight. They were in dark and now the leaders find fault with those who showed light to the people. It was their duty to show the light."

Mr. Jai Prakash Narain added: "We are charged with having defied non-violence. I have as much faith in non-violence as Maulana Azad has, Maulana Azad has much faith in violence as I have. I understand Mahatmaji's non-violence. I bow before it. But since I do not possess that much soul-force, I think it easy to fight with guns. And after all, what does Congress want? Did not Maulana Azad say once that if a National Government was established—only with limited political power—he would fight with guns against the Japanese? Are not Japanese lives human lives? Are only British lives human lives, so that to use arms against them is to defy non-violence?"

"The Congress itself expressed its willingness to defy non-violence on two occasions since 1942. In my opinion,

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non-violence is being utilised or what in English is called exploited for power politics."

Continuing Mr. Jai Prakash said: "I felt happy when I once read a statement by Dr. Rajendra Prasad that young blood would be taken into the Congress. I do not know how far this assurance will be acted upon. No organisation can live if it excludes new blood. The Congress will be a dead organisation if it carries out a policy of this kind of exclusion."

Proceeding Jai Prakash maintained that he belonged to an organisation which believed in unity in Congress ranks until freedom was achieved. Sometimes this policy had cost him dear. Many of his associates had differed from him and he had also been subjected to much unkind criticism. But his Party had borne all that in the interest of the objectives they had placed before themselves, namely, unity in the Congress. Whenever occasion came, they had made their humble sacrifice in that cause. This policy would be adhered to despite criticism and the attempts in certain places to exclude the Socialists from the Congress creed. Jai Prakash once again referred to the glorious role played by the August workers and maintained that it was their achievements which had changed the face and temper of India.

In 1942 the Congress leaders asked the British to quit which the latter did not do. They now said that *Swarajya* was coming. He could not say what kind of *Swaraj* it would be. Friends asked whether *Swarajya* could be achieved by negotiations. They should realise that Delhi talks were not in the nature of a round table conference. These negotiations were the result of the 1942 Movement as well as certain trends in the international situation. The achievements of the Azad Hind Fauj had also played their part in bringing about these negotiations because it was that Fauj which had shaken the roots of British Imperialism by causing a change in the temper of the air, naval as well as land forces. It was the wave of freedom strug-

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gle, the fire of revolution which had compelled three British Ministers to come to India.

But full independence was not possible, because India had not yet acquired that strength. If for instance, the Congress had captured over 30 out of 40 Muslim seats in Bihar, it could be said that they had acquired the necessary strength for independence. It was likely that they might march on to full independence by constitutional means on the lines adopted by the Irish leader de Valera. Though de Valera, too, could not be said to have secured full freedom for his country unless he was able to amalgamate Ulster with Ireland.

When he was in New Delhi, he did not try to pry into the negotiations and so was not in a position to say whether the Mission would succeed or fail. Congress leaders were hopeful. But it would be wrong to take it for granted that compromise would certainly take place. Such negotiations had been held before without effect.

Therefore it was necessary to prepare for the final struggle. Whatever the negotiations might lead to was beside the point. The main point was that British power was still supreme in India. The Union Jack was still flying here. What they had to do was to tear that flag to pieces and hoist the flag of free India.

The movement of 1942 had revolutionised the spirit of the country. Enthusiasm, courage and the desire to be free were present in an abundant measure. But that was not enough. What they needed was organisation. He cited the instance of Ballia district in the 1942 days to stress the value of organisation. In that district, British power had ceased to exist for a few days. The people were really free and the district authorities were in a way prisoners of the people. But only a few days later a contingent of three hundred soldiers not only restored British power but committed excesses which led to complete demoralisation. Leaders had toured the district and paid tribute to its heroic deeds. What Ballia did as a district

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was done by the province of Bihar as a whole. But nowhere were the people able to retain the acquired power for long. So he would undertake a tour of Ballia to find out the causes of the defeat of the people by a small force. The mistakes that had been made should not be repeated.

So what they needed was organisation. The days of conferences and demonstrations were over. They had their value once. But now the messages which were conveyed to the people through big gatherings were in their heart. They wanted organisation, organisation to conduct the struggle efficiently. When men and women, young and old, shouted 'Quit India' slogan, propaganda meetings were irrelevant. "We must organise peacefully. On this score I have a grievance against the Congress. Ever since the organisation was declared legal, it has devoted its entire energy to fighting election and organisational work has been ignored. Whenever Mahatmaji starts compromise negotiation, all eyes are turned towards it."

Disapproving this tendency, Jai Prakash emphasised that the Congress workers should apply themselves to organisational work. The Working Committee should place a concrete programme. They had not been able so far to organise a powerful volunteer corps. Elections should provide engagement only for a few. Let others prepare for struggle.

The speaker said he had no programme to offer just at present. He would like to study the conditions first. But he would soon meet the people again and place his programme before them.

2

Speech at the A.I.C.C. Meeting, Bombay (1946)

PRESS SUMMARY

MR. JAI PRAKASH NARAIN, Leader of the Congress Socialist Party, led the Left-wing opposition to the Congress Working Committee's decision. Opposing the resolution, he said that the proposed Constituent Assembly which was being brought into existence by the British Power in India was not going to bring the Swaraj for the people of India for which the Congress had been fighting all these years.

The 'Quit India' Movement of 1942 had been launched to rid India of British imperial power, but that struggle did not achieve its end though it released new forces which have taken the country far towards its goal. The question today before the country was not whether to accept the so-called Constituent Assembly scheme sponsored by British imperialism but how to utilise the new forces to drive the British out of India.

The British Cabinet Mission, Mr. Jai Prakash said, had not come to deliver freedom to India but to play the mediator between the Congress and the Muslim League. The British had created the so-called differences and they were still trying to exploit them. The Muslim League may have a large following among Muslims of India today, but the League was still the ally and friend of the British. The Cabinet Mission was asking the Congress to swallow its principles and compromise with the League leader who in 1942 unashamedly declared that the 'Quit India' Movement was not against the British but against the Muslims to perpetuate Hindu domination. How could the Congress settle with such a leader? "I feel confident that the Congress can break the League's hold on the Muslims by its going

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direct to the Muslim masses. Instead of making this direct approach we are trying to negotiate with the leader of the Muslim League whom we know to be the friend of our enemies. I am glad the Working Committee has turned down the proposals for the Interim Government.

"I feel the acceptance of the Constituent Assembly scheme also foreshadows danger. The Constituent Assembly proposed by the British is far from our original idea which was given to us by our Rashtrapati Pandit Nehru. This Constituent Assembly is the creation of the British and it can never bring us the freedom that we have been fighting for. The British Government may promise to accept the constitution drawn up by the Constituent Assembly but then the British Government themselves will pull the wires in such a manner as not to allow us to frame a constitution that we all desire for a free and independent India. Whenever a difference of opinion arises between the Congress and the League in the Constituent Assembly, and differences are bound to arise, then we have to go to the British Government for a solution. And do you think we can expect fair play from the British in such a situation? If on the contrary the Constituent Assembly is the outcome of the strength of the people we can solve all our difficulties by an appeal to our people.

"I am aware that all these and other defects must have been considered by the Working Committee before it came to the final decision it has. But I see no reason why we should accept such a defective proposal, knowing the pitfall in advance and also knowing our own real strength.

"The only thing we can do is to tell the British Government that we do not want such a restricted and curbed Constituent Assembly. We shall weaken ourselves, if we accept the British Government's proposals. The acceptance of offices in the provinces has weakened us considerably. If we accept these proposals, we shall further weaken ourselves. The course of negotiations adopted by the Working Committee in my opinion has not led us to our

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goal. Why then should we not abandon such negotiations and prepare for another struggle? There is only one way open to us and that is to strengthen the Congress organisation and when we are sure of our own inherent strength start a fight with the British Government, compel them to quit India and make them understand that they have to transfer power and that can be done only by negotiating with the Congress.

"I wish to make it clear that I am not opposing the Working Committee's decision merely to discredit the Working Committee, but I honestly feel that the decision of the Working Committee is wrong and, therefore, it should not be approved. The All-India Congress Committee has a chance of righting that mistake and that opportunity should not be missed."

VIII

THIRD LETTER TO THE FIGHTERS
OF FREEDOM

—*9th August, 1946*

THIRD LETTER TO THE FIGHTERS OF FREEDOM

—9th August, 1946

Friends,

S OON after my release when I sent you my greetings through *Janata*, I had promised that later I would place before you my views on the present situation and explain to you our present tasks. I regret that there has been so much delay in doing this. The delay was unavoidable, because it was necessary to meet colleagues and consult with them. All this has been done, and it is possible now to place before you something in a definite shape.

Before this, through various statements jointly or severally issued, my colleagues and I have attempted to place our views before you on important questions as they arose. You have been acquainted with our stand in the last A.I.C.C. Below I attempt more systematically and fully to express my views, and I hope also the views of my colleagues, on the present situation and indicate the tasks that face us and the methods we should adopt to accomplish them.

The present situation is one of transition and rapid change. The A.I.C.C. has agreed that Congressmen should go to the British-sponsored Constituent Assembly. An interim government under the British Viceroy might soon be functioning. This government whenever it may come into being cannot be a free government of a free country till the Viceroy and British armed forces and other British personnel quit India. To beg that this government be allowed to function as a free government is to beg the question. Those who have the power to hand over power at their pleasure have also the power to take it back at their pleasure. Therefore, let us not be duped by the talk of an interim government being "in effect" the government of a free India.

Could then the so-called Constituent Assembly bring us freedom? In other words, could that Assembly declare

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India an independent republic and enforce that declaration? Could it, for instance, appoint a provisional government and force the Viceroy to hand over all power to it and quit India? Could the Provisional Government pack off all British soldiers and military and civil officers to Britain? Could that government tear up the stranglehold of British finance over this country? Could the Constituent Assembly dissolve itself and empower the free Provisional Government, after the British had quit, to convene a real Constituent Assembly elected by the people on the basis of unrestricted adult suffrage? Could the proposed Constituent Assembly take all these steps, everyone of which is essential to lead India to full freedom and democracy? It would be a grave folly to suppose that in the existing circumstances and with the present co-relation of forces it could ever be possible for the proposed Constituent Assembly to take any of these steps and achieve any of these objectives. But even if we were to suppose for a moment that the Assembly could make this attempt, the British would be certain to bar its way. Then if the Assembly were sincere and honest it would have to accept the British challenge and invoke its mass sanctions in order to enforce its will. The Viceroy who would have called the Assembly to begin with would then step in and order its dissolution. Thus an all-out war of independence would ensue out of which should emerge a real Constituent Assembly of the people and a free democratic and united Republic of India.

The Constituent Assembly, however, is not very likely to follow these steps. Aware of what President Nehru has described as the compulsion of facts, i.e., aware of the limitations of its sovereignty, aware of its weaknesses, aware of the British stooges and enemies of freedom and democracy in its ranks, aware of the presence of the British Army and British Viceroy—aware of all this and more, the Constituent Assembly might choose to tread what I am sure is going to be described as the path of realism. In other

TO THE FIGHTERS OF FREEDOM

words, the Assembly might decide to make compromise after compromise producing in the end neither freedom, nor democracy, nor national unity. So, the nation, thwarted and disillusioned, would have to turn once again to the path from which it is being misled today—the path of revolutionary action, the path of resistance and struggle, the straight but difficult path of freedom.

Thus we see that in either case, i.e., whether the Constituent Assembly “succeeds” or whether it fights and “fails”, a struggle for freedom is inevitable. Anyone who has a correct appreciation of the present co-relation of forces in this country should not find it difficult to accept this conclusion. Today, it is still possible for British imperialism to face us with the “compulsion of facts”. Till this compulsion is removed by revolutionary action, freedom would be an illusion. Nor can any one expect to change the facts of the present situation by argument, concession and diplomatic *finesse*.

We therefore reach the conclusion—and it will bear repetition—that the struggle for freedom does not cease with the acceptance of the British constitutional proposals. That struggle will continue. In fact, the character and scope of that struggle will become deeper and wider. To the struggle for liberty will be added the struggle for national unity and bread.

A COMMON STRUGGLE

Acceptance of the British proposals will let loose many forces of national disintegration. It is commonly supposed that one positive contribution that the British have made to Indian polity is to unify the country; and it is a common lament that they foolishly enough are bent today upon destroying that monument of their noble work. Nothing could be greater folly than this view. Far from creating unity in Indian life the British have always done their best to divide us; to divide Hindus and Muslims, to divide Harijans from other Hindus, to create a Sikh minority, to detach princely India from the rest of the country,

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to set the princes against the people, to bolster up the Zemindars into pillars of British rule, to bribe Capital and the middle class to turn into enemies of their country. That is, in their hundred years' rule they have done all that that was possible to bring about a situation in which weakening of British rule was sure to mean chaos and disintegration. The only unity under British rule is the unity of a dictatorial regime and not a people's or a nation's unity. Such positive unity has been created by the Congress and this unity today is in jeopardy. Therefore, the struggle for national unity is bound to acquire a special importance with the acceptance of the British proposals.

Secondly, the impending constitutional changes are bound to bring to the fore, economic and class issues. The form of Swaraj, the question, "Swaraj for whom?" will no longer remain academic or remote questions, but will become matters of immediate and urgent importance demanding immediate answers and affecting all our politics not theoretically but practically. That is, the struggle for bread, always an integral part of the struggle for freedom, will move up to the front line and acquire an importance no less than any other.

I should make it clear that these are not three separate struggles, but aspects or parts of one common struggle of the people. At different stages, one or the other aspect receives greater or less emphasis, but as the present constitutional plans develop, all these are likely to assume equal importance.

As matters stand, the common struggle of the people would have to be waged in the context of a Constituent Assembly, possibly an interim government, and later on in the context of a Union government, Group and Provincial governments.

The Congress, of which we are a part, seems likely to be associated with all these developments. As such, it seems certain that the Congress struggle for liberty, unity and bread will be conducted, if at all, through the consti-

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tutional and state machinery. Already the Congress is being converted into a parliamentary party. If this process goes on to its logical conclusion, there can be little doubt that the Congress must fail to achieve much success in this three-fold struggle. A constitutional and administrative machinery might be of use in certain circumstances, but situated as we are, the people's struggle must be carried on mainly outside the Legislatures and the portals of government departments.

To carry on this struggle is our job today—the job of all the fighters for freedom.

II

“MASS SANCTIONS”

How shall we wage this struggle? By terrorism? By sporadic violence? By fratricide? By dacoities? By incendiarism? Obviously no. At the present moment the only manner in which we can wage this struggle is by forging *mass sanctions*. The creation of mass sanctions includes, first, the psychological preparation of the masses for a struggle; second, the building up of organizations of the masses, such as peasant and labour unions, volunteer corps, student and youth organizations, village republics and weavers' co-operatives and myriad other organizations which would help in different ways to develop the collective strength and consciousness of the people. To all this must be added the over-all task of strengthening and vitalising the Congress organisation and renewing and extending its effective contacts with the people. A full picture of the task of creating mass sanctions, in so far as it relates to the present phase of our struggle, is laid out below in the section dealing with our programme.

Here let me illustrate my meaning of the term “mass sanctions” in the context of national unity. National unity cannot be imposed from above. It must be based on unity at the bottom. Such unity can be brought about, or at least a considerable success be gained in the task, by pa-

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tient political work among the Muslims, by the development of economic or class organisations, such as labour unions, Kisan Sabhas, weavers' co-operatives, by social reform among the Hindus by encouraging common cultural and recreational activities, by strengthening those forces in society that by their very nature work for national unity, such as the need for a strong frontier, the need for a co-ordinated plan of economic development, the need for a common economic system, the need for a common medium of speech, etc., and in many other ways. The first requirement, I need hardly stress, is for every freedom fighter to be completely free from communal or caste prejudice or arrogance, and to practise in his personal life the principle of the equality of all human beings.

The mass sanctions for national unity are particularly weak at the moment. Their development is a foremost priority on the list of our present tasks.

Lest there should be misunderstanding I must point out that the work of developing mass sanctions cannot be split into compartments and sanctions for each objective created separately from the others. The political, economic and social sanctions overlap, interpenetrate and supplement each other and form part of one broad movement of the people.

III

THE PROBLEM OF ORGANIZATION

Before I proceed to explain our present programme of work, it is necessary to place before you my views, which I am glad to say are also the views of most of my colleagues, regarding the form of organization through which fighters for freedom could function today. During the August Revolution all of us functioned in the name of the Congress. That was as it should have been, because it was the policy of the whole Congress then to fight. Any Congressmen who kept away from the fight or opposed it, opposed and betrayed the Congress. Today the position is

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different. The official policy of the Congress today is not a policy of struggle or preparation for a struggle; it is rather a policy of compromise and constitutionalism. Therefore, it is not possible for us today who still adhere to the policy of struggle and revolutionary action to function in the name of the Congress.

But, at the same time I am very clear in my mind that it would do the greatest possible injury to the cause of freedom in this country if we were to leave the Congress and form a parallel mass organisation. There is no doubt that there is going to be a growing divergence between our line of work and that of the present Congress leadership. But the leadership is not identical with the organization. The present Congress is as much the result of your labours and sacrifices as of any other group within it. You have as much right to speak in the name of the Congress as any one else. The Congress represents the greatest organized national and social force in the country and exercises unparalleled and unprecedented power over the mass mind. As such it is an instrument *par excellence* for a mass struggle. It would be foolish to give up this instrument *as long as the possibility exists of its being utilized for a revolutionary purpose*. I believe that this possibility still exists today. Therefore I have no doubt in my mind that we must continue to work within the Congress, doing our utmost to strengthen it, trying by active work and service of the people to convert it to our views. If the present Congress leadership persists in its attempt to transform the Congress into a mere parliamentary body with no constructive programme, relying entirely on governmental machinery to serve or rule over the people, turning more and more bureaucratic, keeping its hold over the Congress organization by the distribution of patronage and largesse, we shall no doubt be unavoidably drawn into conflict with it. But, at the same time if we carry on our work among the people with energy and devotion, we shall undoubtedly be in a position to rally the Congress masses around us

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and resurrect the Congress from its parliamentary *debris*.

We arrive then at two important conclusions: (1) It is not possible for us now as during the August uprising to work and act in the name of the Congress; (2) We must continue to work within the Congress. The problem now arises, how are we to function so that we may act in an organized and co-ordinated manner and provide all fighters with a political and ideological focus. This question assumes an added importance when we remember that our activities are not confined to our work within the Congress alone. We have to function in trade unions, kisan sabhas and many other organizations which are outside the Congress. It were possible perhaps had we to work in the Congress alone to function as a loose group, but if we are to fulfil our present tasks efficiently, an organized focus of the type described above has to be created.

I have thought earnestly over this question and consulted with my colleagues and have come to the conclusion that we have in the Congress Socialist Party a readymade basis for an organization of the type we require today. I believe that after proper overhauling and reorganization the C.S.P. would serve our purpose admirably. The C.S.P. has a fine record of political work, and the contribution it made to the August Revolution was, even hostile critics agree, worthy of commendation. The old party had certain organizational weaknesses, part of which was due to the experiments it had made in socialist and Left unity. These weaknesses can and will be removed. My recent contacts with August fighters has shown me that while there are a few who cannot rid themselves of old prejudices, the vast majority do look upon the C.S.P. with hope and show a great deal of goodwill towards it. I therefore came to the conclusion as I said above that the C.S.P. should become the organization of all fighters for freedom.

I should mention here an additional reason that supports this conclusion. The C.S.P. includes in its platform the objective of national freedom as well as of socialism. I

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believe ninety-five out of hundred fighters for freedom have today a strong inclination towards socialism. National freedom without socialism can never satisfy them. Therefore the C.S.P. becomes doubly acceptable to them.

LEFT UNITY

Related to the problem of organization is the problem of Left unity. It appears to me that there is a great deal of confusion regarding this subject. The question of Left unity is one of the most vexed questions in the world. It is my view that the question, in the form in which it is raised, is insoluble. Left unity in the sense of unity of all Left parties and groups is an impossibility. Those who talk of such a unity should first ask themselves why is there Left disunity to begin with. In other words, the question should be asked, why do separate Left parties at all come into existence. I think if that question were examined properly, it would be found that the same causes that first gave birth to separatist and sectarian tendencies would also prevent subsequent unification.

The experience of Left movements throughout the world shows that Left groups have not found it possible to unite or even to work together except on specific occasions and for short periods. This historical evidence has surely a lesson for us.

In our own country our experience has been no different. We made serious attempts on two occasions for Left unity. These attempts not only failed to achieve their object, but also left a trail of bitterness that still hinders work. Our past experience showed that while the C.S.P. sincerely opened its doors to Left and Socialist groups and extended its hand of friendship to them, they only sought in all that an opportunity to enlarge their respective influence, recruit members and build cells, "bore from within" and to play other tricks that have been played all over the world in the name of Left unity.

Therefore, as far as I am concerned, I have no faith in so-called Left unity, and do not wish to experiment with

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it any more. I think the far better course is for all Leftists to forget their little denominational enthusiasms and doctrinal fanaticisms, and to come into one wide, roomy fold and build a single party of Left nationalism and Socialism. Such a party today is the C.S.P. It is possible to find fault with it and pick holes in it, but it is far more fruitful to join hands, to rub off our ideological angularities and fit ourselves into one large pattern in which doctrinal differences might be subordinated to one broad and bold design of common objectives, common methods and a broad common ideology. If the Left and Socialist movement in India is to grow, it could do so not through the unsteady and uneasy combination of various groups, who even when combining must explain and justify their separate identities, who even while trying to work together must work to strengthen their respective organizations by fresh recruitment and partisan propaganda, but by the growth of one large single party. I cannot conceive that there is any other party in India that can fill this role except the C.S.P. I therefore appeal to all fighters to make the C.S.P. their own. They have already done so to a very large extent. I appeal to the others also to do the same.

Local difficulties, difficulties of personal equation and old prejudices might stand in the way of some friends, but I should like to assure every fighter that as far as it may lie in our power, we shall see that these difficulties are removed from their way and the path left clear for them to co-operate in building up a real powerful organization.

IV

OUR PRESENT PROGRAMME

I do not wish to deal here with a comprehensive political programme. Later there will be occasion for it—perhaps in the Party's Statement of Policy. Here I wish to give only a general outline of the work we must take up immediately.

Perhaps we could understand our present tasks better if a picture of the future struggle were before us. The

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picture I have in view is this: first atomization and dislocation of imperialism by such means as are most efficient; second, simultaneous building up of units of free government in both town and country and protection of these from attack—these local and regional swaraj governments ultimately coalescing to form the Free Republic of India. This pattern will naturally include any form of non-cooperation with the British power. It includes the struggle of the Congress Ministries from within the administrative system. It includes a total industrial strike. It includes the taking over of zemindari lands by the peasants. It includes a movement of the people of the States against the tyranny of the princes. The outstanding feature that would distinguish this struggle from those gone before, including the '42 rebellion, would be, to my mind, the emergence of responsible local and regional authorities and the carrying out of the further tasks by these authorities themselves. Details could be added to this picture, but I believe its broad outlines are given above.

With this picture before me I shall attempt to sketch briefly an outline of our present programme.

Our immediate purpose, as we have seen, is to prepare for a struggle for freedom. This preparation includes different types of work. Naturally, there are certain types of work which I cannot discuss here.

THE WORKER

But before I proceed to discuss the work itself, let me say a word about the worker. If I were asked today what was our most important job at this stage, I would reply: *selection and training of the worker*. The agitational phase of our struggle has long since past. We are already in the actual revolutionary phase, the main task of which is to take over power. To-day we need a very different kind of Congressman, a different kind of Party comrade, from what was needed before the war. The revolutionary of today should be trained not only in agitational, but also, and largely, in organizational work. He should be ac-

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acquainted with constructive as well as other forms of work. He should be an effective bridge between the revolutionary organisation and the people among whom he works; that is, he should be able not only to impart his revolutionary fervour to them, but also to acquaint them with their place and tasks in the revolution. He should be honest, fearless, disciplined and hardworking. The same worker would not do for every kind of work; so, apart from general training, and according to the worker's bent and capacity, specialized training, as for trade union work, village work, press and publicity work, survey work, etc., must be given to selected workers.

Our country is very large; and in an emergency it may not be possible for a central body to issue directions to revolutionary workers in different parts of the country. It is, therefore, necessary to train local leaders who will know how to act in a moment of national crisis.

This training of workers has to be given both through work and study and discussion. For the second part of the training, i.e., for study and discussion, it would be necessary to open study camps and schools, either of temporary or permanent character. For this instructors and literature are necessary.

"SPECIALISED" WORK

I shall turn now to the programme of work itself. For the purpose of exposition I shall divide the type of work which it is possible to discuss here into two parts: general and specialised work. In the second category I place such activities as trade union and kisan sabha work, student and volunteer organization, organization of producers, such as weavers or cane-growers co-operatives, co-operative farming, and work of similar nature. With this kind of specialized work, we have been more or less acquainted. But this work has to be much more systematically done and extended to newer fields. Training, knowledge and study has to be brought to bear on it. Above all, our central revolutionary purpose and social philosophy must

animate and integrate the whole of it and prevent it from degenerating into disjointed sectional movements for immediate economic betterment, or into mere demonstrative or agitational channels. A co-operative or a trade union or peasant movement can easily slide into what is known as economism. This has to be prevented. Further, take volunteering or the student movement. It is not enough that a volunteer organization should restrict itself to drill and physical training, crowd control and demonstration. Each volunteer must know some means, however humble, of serving his community, and his officers at least, must know the place of his men in the coming revolution and their posts of duty then. The Students' Congress has very largely become an agitational movement. That is not enough. The Congress must take up constructive activities among the students themselves and in the community in which they live. For instance, educational work (teaching the children of the poor, adult literacy, *Hindustani Prachar*, cultural work—discussions, debates, theatres, art exhibition), health drives, survey work, helping in trade union or similar activities, excursions, work in the villages during vacations student service centres self-help groups etc.

TRADE UNION CONGRESS

The Trade Union Congress has been a politically backward movement in this country. This backwardness was never more evident than during the war years, when the A. I. T. U. C. was unable to give a political lead to the workers of India. Even when the whole country was convulsed by a revolutionary upsurge and large sections of the working class were drawn into it, the A. I. T. U. C. remained paralysed and unable to say whether it was on the side of the Revolution or the imperialist power. This was largely due to the betrayal of the Communist Party of India. This political paralysis of the T. U. C. must be cured and the Trade Union movement brought in line with the revolutionary struggle and the workers enabled to play their proper part in it

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The Kisan movement lies disrupted and broken today very largely, again, due to the tactics of the Communists. That part of the kisan movement which stands by the national struggle must be united again and the whole movement built up anew.

Producers' co-operative and co-operative farming are new types of work which I recommend. A beginning might have been made here or there before, but generally speaking it is new work for us. Wherever suitable cadres are available and other necessary conditions exist, a beginning should be made in this direction.

In a previous section I have said that creation of sanctions for national unity is a high priority on our work schedule. I wish to repeat that here and draw your attention again to what I have said above in that connection.

I have not exhausted the list of special types of work which we have to undertake. The above is only an illustrative list. There is in addition, to give only one instance, a very special type of work to be done among women. Somebody who is more competent to speak about it may later advise you regarding this very important work. Then, to give other instances, there is Gandhiji's constructive programme. Such items of it as we may take up, such as removal of untouchability, prohibition, village sanitation, basic education, etc., should be made a part of our programme. In short, there is no dearth of work or means to serve, organise, educate the people and to develop their strength and ability to fight. There is dearth only of workers to do all this work, and to do it properly and well.

"GENERAL" WORK

I shall turn now to the general type of our work. In the forefront of this type of work, I must place Congress work i.e., building up, strengthening and popularising the Congress. The hold that the Congress has over the people is greater today than ever before. But generally speaking the Congress organization has become moribund, and due to the parliamentary programme, a considerable amount

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of corruption has developed within it. It should be our foremost task first to activate the Congress Committees and re-build the brigade of service that should exist between them and the people. Second, we should ever be vigilant and fight corruption within the Congress in all its forms.

"Activate the Congress Committees" is a somewhat hackneyed phrase. So, I should perhaps amplify my meaning. It is obvious that the Congress committees can best be activated only if the A. I. C. C. and the Provincial committees give a lead. It should be the job of these committees to give directions from time to time, assigning a certain job of work to be done within a certain time-limit, such as a certain survey to be made, a certain drive to be launched, let us say against untouchability or for communal harmony, adult literacy, grain banks, enrolment of rural volunteers, etc. These higher committees should produce periodical talking points for its workers and produce other literature to help them in their day to day work and to understand their problems. These committees should do research work and political planning. I see no reason why the Congress as a whole should not take up and make its own all the items of work described above or those I am about to describe below. Yet, I cannot say when, or if at all, these committees will begin to function in this manner. In the meanwhile wherever we are able to work through the Congress Committees it should be our job to push the whole programme described here through them. But where it is not possible to do so, we would have to work out this programme through the Party branches, which should attempt to associate all other genuine fighters with them.

Coming to other items of general work, let me first explain what I mean by the term. Our specialized work deals, as we have seen, with different sections or classes of our people. But when we take up a community as a whole, such as a village or a town or a ward in a town, and treat

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it as a whole in our work, I describe that work as general work. In a village we may, for instance, form a Kisan Sabha, or in a town a Labour Union: that would be specialized work. But if we approach the village or the town as a whole, I would call it general work.

VILLAGE WORK

Let me take up village work first. The ultimate object, say, after six months' work, is to establish a *gram raj*. A *gram raj* is a self-governing village, a village republic, not merely a panchayat. This *gram raj* is to be built up by the villagers themselves, by their own initiative and not by the governmental agencies. The *gram rajs* as I conceive them would make foreign rule unnecessary, would become the centres of struggle and resistance during a revolution and would constitute the bricks with which the structure of the free Indian Republic could be built.

Before a *gram raj* can be formed in a village, a great deal of constructive work will have to be done. I suggest the following types of work for this:

1. Enrolment of Congress members. Attempt should be made to enrol every adult villager. Meetings of the enrolled members should be held. Flag salutation.
2. A cultural centre should be opened where newspapers should be read and such other activities conducted as adult literacy, dramatics, folk songs, study circle, library, posters, agricultural advice etc.
3. Sevadai and Akhada work.
4. Problems of sanitation, roads, bunds, etc., tackled in a practical way. Collective labour for common purposes should be encouraged.
5. Untouchability work.
6. Communal harmony work.
7. Prohibition.
8. Survey of conditions.
9. Redress of grievances.
10. Founding of Grain Banks.

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11. Propaganda in neighbouring villages.
12. Co-operative marketing.
13. Work among women and children.

In a village where work of this nature has been done by honest, devoted workers who have succeeded in winning the full co-operation of the villagers, it should be possible in a few months to establish a *gram raj*. In such a village then it should be possible also to start co-operative farming and subsidiary co-operative industries.

Here is work that would need the best type of trained workers, and in numbers that can be almost unlimited. Here is work that goes to the very roots of Indian economic, political and social life and that is charged with the utmost revolutionary and constructive possibilities.

I have a similar picture of our urban work. In the towns and cities, wards or mohallas should be the community unit that we should take up as a whole. In a ward the same type of constructive work as described for the village with modifications dictated by urban problems should be taken up through one or various centres. In this work care should be taken to approach the poorer classes in the city. Forms of service, education propaganda, organization, suitable for them should be evolved. Active members of the Students' Congress should be invited to participate in this work.

It is possible to elaborate further this programme of work, but as an illustration it should serve its purpose. Local initiative and further experience may add to or subtract from it. I commend it now to you and I hope you will find it of some use.

Before I close I should like again to draw your attention to our central revolutionary purpose. Remember that the same work can be done in different ways and with different motives. Our governing motive should inform all the work we do and transform it into a revolutionary instrument.

Yours fraternally,
JAYA PRAKASH

APPENDIX

[The following article, containing a draft resolution for the Ramgarh Congress sent by Com. Jayaprakash Narayan, General Secretary, All-India Congress Socialist Party, to the Working Committee, was published by Mahatma Gandhi in the *Harijan* dated April 20, 1940 under the caption 'Jayaprakash's Picture'.—Editor.]

THE Congress and the country are on the eve of a great national upheaval. The final battle for freedom is soon to be fought. This will happen when the whole world is being shaken by mighty forces of change. Out of the catastrophe of the European War, thoughtful minds everywhere are anxious to create a new world—a world based on the co-operative goodwill of nations and men. At such a time the Congress considers it necessary to state definitely the ideals of freedom for which it stands and for which it is soon to invite the Indian people to undergo the uttermost sufferings.

The free Indian nation shall work for peace between nations and total rejection of armaments and for the method of peaceful settlement of national disputes through some international authority freely established. It will endeavour particularly to live on the friendliest terms with its neighbours, whether they be great powers or small nations, and shall covet no foreign territory.

The law of the land will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis of maintenance of order shall be the sanction and concurrence of the people.

The free Indian State shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom, provided that there shall be no freedom to overthrow by violence the constitution framed by the Indian people through a Constituent Assembly.

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The State shall not discriminate in any manner between citizens of the nation. Every citizen shall be guaranteed equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privilege shall be abolished. There shall be no titles emanating either from inherited social status or the State.

ECONOMIC ORGANISATION

The political and economic organisation of the State shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. While this organisation shall conduce to the satisfaction of the national requirements of every member of society, material satisfaction shall not be its sole objective. It shall aim at healthy living and the moral and intellectual development of the individual. To this end to secure social justice, the State shall endeavour to promote small-scale production carried on by individual or co-operative effort for the equal benefit of all concerned. All large-scale collective production shall be eventually brought under collective ownership and control, and in this behalf the State shall begin by nationalising heavy transport, shipping, mining and the heavy industries. The textile industry shall be progressively decentralised.

The life of the villages shall be reorganised and the villages shall be made self-governing units, self-sufficient in as large a measure as possible. The land laws of the country shall be drastically reformed on the principle that land shall belong to the actual cultivator alone, and that no cultivator shall have more land than is necessary to support his family on a fair standard of living. This will end the various systems of landlordism on the one hand and farm bondage on the other.

The State shall protect the interests of the classes, but when these impinge upon the interests of those who have been poor and downtrodden it shall defend the latter and thus restore the balance of social justice.

STATE INDUSTRIES

In all State-owned and State-managed enterprises, the workers shall be represented in the management through

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their elected representatives and shall have an equal share in it with the representatives of the Government.

In the Indian States, there shall be complete democratic government established and in accordance with the principles of abolition of social distinction and equality between citizens, there shall not be any titular heads of the States in the persons of Rajas and Nawabs.

This is the order which the Congress envisages and which it shall work to establish. The Congress firmly believes that this order shall bring happiness, prosperity and freedom to the people of all races and religions in India who together shall build on these foundations a great and glorious nation.

I like it and read his letter and the draft to the Working Committee. The committee, however, thought that the idea of having only one resolution for Ramgarh Congress should be strictly adhered to, and that the original, as framed at Patna, should not be tampered with. The reasoning of the committee was unexceptionable, and the draft resolution was dropped without any discussion on merits. I informed Shri Jaya Prakash of the result of my effort. He wrote back suggesting that he would be satisfied if I could do the next best thing, namely, publish it with full concurrence or such as I could give it.

I have no difficulty in complying with Shri Jaya Prakash's wishes. As an ideal to be reduced to practice as soon as possible after India comes into her own, I endorse in general all except one of the propositions enunciated by Shri Jai Prakash.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

I have claimed that I was a socialist long before those I know in India had avowed their creed. But my socialism was natural to me and not adopted from any books. It came out of my unshakable belief in non-violence. No man could be actively non-violent and not rise against social injustice, no matter where it occurred. Unfortu-

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nately Western socialists have, so far as I know, believed in the necessity of violence for enforcing socialistic doctrines.

I have always held that social justice, even unto the least and the lowliest, is impossible of attainment by force. I have further believed that it is possible by proper training of the lowliest by non-violent means to secure redress of the wrongs suffered by them. That means non-violent non-co-operation. At times non-co-operation becomes as much a duty as co-operation. No one is bound to co-operate in one's own undoing or slavery. Freedom received through the effort of others, however benevolent, cannot be retained when such effort is withdrawn. In other words, such freedom is not real freedom. But the lowliest can feel its glow as soon as they learn the art of attaining it through non-violent non-co-operation.

It therefore gladdens me to find Shri Jaya Prakash accepting, as I read his draft, non-violence for the purpose of establishing the order envisaged by him. I am quite sure that non-violent non-co-operation can secure what violence never can, and this by ultimate conversion of the wrongdoers. We in India have never given non-violence the trial it has deserved. The marvel is that we have attained so much even with our mixed non-violence.

NOT FRIGHTFUL

Shri Jaya Prakash's propositions about land may appear frightful. In reality they are not. No man should have more land than he needs for dignified sustenance. Who can dispute the fact that the grinding poverty of the masses is due to their having no land that they can call their own? •

But it must be realised that the reform cannot be rushed. If it is to be brought about by non-violent means, it can only be done by education both of the haves and have-nots. The former should be assured that there never will be force used against them. The have-nots must be edu-

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cated to know that no one can really compel them to do anything against their will, and that they can secure their freedom by learning the art of non-violence, i.e., self-suffering. If the end in view is to be achieved, the education I have adumbrated has to be commenced now. An atmosphere of mutual respect and trust has to be established as the preliminary step. There can then be no violent conflict between the classes and the masses.

Whilst, therefore, I have no difficulty in generally endorsing Shri Jaya Prakash's proposition in terms of non-violence, I cannot endorse his proposition about the Princes. In law, they are independent. It is true that their independence is not worth much, for it is guaranteed by a stronger party. But as against us they are able to assert their independence. If we come into our own through non-violent means, as is implied in Shri Jaya Prakash's draft proposals, I do not imagine a settlement in which the Princes will have effaced themselves. Whatever settlement is arrived at, the nation will have to carry out in full. I can therefore only conceive a settlement in which the big States will retain their status. In one way this will be far superior to what it is today; but in another it will be limited so as to give the people of the States the same right of self-government within their States as the people of the other parts of India will enjoy. They will have freedom of speech, a free press and pure justice guaranteed to them. Perhaps Shri Jayaprakash has no faith in the Princes automatically surrendering their autocracy. I have. First because they are just as good human beings as we are, and secondly because of my belief in the potency of genuine non-violence. Let me conclude, therefore, by saying that the Princes and all others will be true and amenable when we have become true to ourselves, to our faith, if we have it, and to the nation. At present we are *half-hearted*. The way to freedom will never be found through half-heartedness. Non-violence begins and ends by turning the searchlight inward.

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